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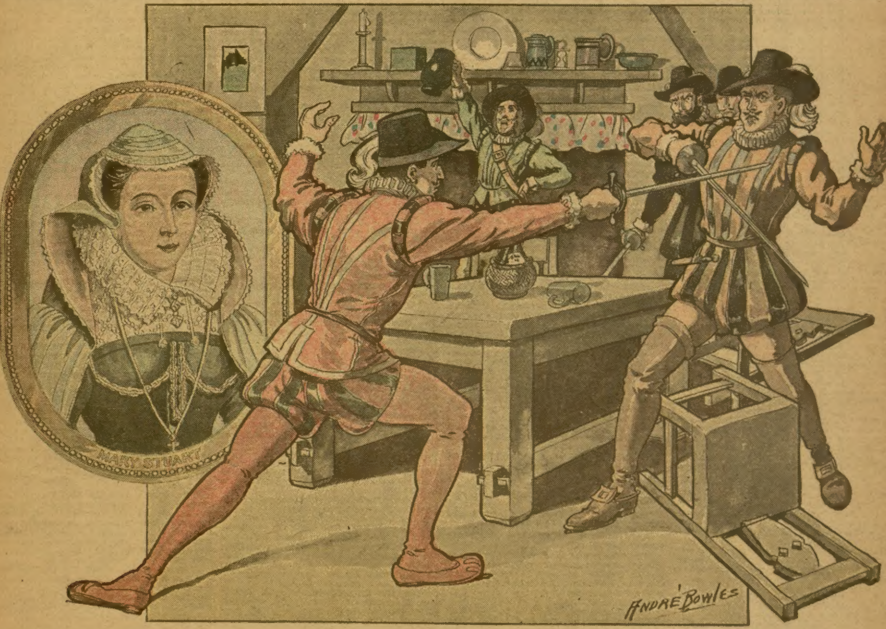

For Scotland's Queen

Or, Hearts and Swords

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER I.

I FARE TO LONDON.

WHEN I sit down and calmly turn the leaves of my adventurous life, I, Henri, Sieur de la Tournay, wonder what I was created for. I often ask myself if it would not have been better if I had been born in a hovel instead of a castle, if my hand had grown used to a cowherd's whip rather than the sword. But fate surely presides at the birth of man, and environment rocks the cradle and steers us to the ports of peace or to the vortex of doom. I am now only eight and thirty, and more adventures have been crowded into my life, more intrigue and passion, than usually comes to one who has reached his three score and ten.

When I came into the world in Miramont Castle in one of the fairest districts of France, my loving parents predicted many fortunate things for me. I was to remain in my native country, an honor to my inherited name. I was to grow up a great landowner, to see nothing of the world but my broad acres, to wed Annette Trouville, raise a family, and live an uneventful life till I was laid away beneath the old castle with my sires.

But alas! it was not to be so. I was to break from the restraints that bound me. I was destined to become a rolling stone, and in my hand was to shine the best and truest sword in two kingdoms. I was to slip the leash early in life, to hobnob with princes, rogues and paupers, and to crown my prodigal career as the champion of the most beautiful and unfortunate queen that ever lived.

Thus I sit down to transcribe the greatest adventure of my life, knowing not if my narrative will ever see the light, but if it does it will be long after I have crumbled to dust and the Tournay sword has lost its brightness.

I shall set down the truth whilst my hand retains its cunning, omitting none of the perils through which I passed, nor shall I hold back the story of my own failings.

She is dead against whom I pitted my cunning, the Great Elizabeth, now the "Good Queen Bess" and again the mistress-monarch of the world, the royal lioness of the House of Tudor.

I had but just returned from the whirl of Paris when a sealed packet was placed in my hands by my esquire, Jean Altamonte, who had been my companion from early childhood. It was so well and cunningly sealed that I gazed at it for some time, which seemed to weary Jean's patience.

"It was placed in my hands last night," he explained, "with instructions to deliver it to no one but my young master. The messenger I did not know, and he galloped away without explanations."

Wondering what the mysterious packet contained, I broke the seals and, turning aside from the curious youth, devoured its contents, which were brief and ran as follows:

"My Dear Tournay: Come to me upon receipt of this. Your clear head, strong and good sword are needed in London. It is the chance and glory of a lifetime. Shall the most beautiful woman in the world feel the teeth of the lioness of Tudor? Come at once, or lose the love and feel the curse of
"SURREY."

The words thrilled me as I had never been thrilled before. Cecil Surrey! What lively memories I had of him! In times agone we had crossed blades with the roysterers of England, we had made love and gambled in the panoplied halls of Queen Elizabeth's capital. We had made the Cardinal's Hat a shambles one Christmas night, and the next day, with fifty sworded wolves at my heels, I had scurried back to France.

I had longed for the old times. Life in Paris and at Miramont had grown too tame for me. I wanted adventure and ere I finished Surrey's letter I had resolved to return to London. Just what was up I did not know, but Surrey had called and that was enough. I fancied that his "most beautiful woman in the world" was the unfortunate Mary Stuart, then languishing in gloomy Fotheringay Castle, held captive by her crowned rival until the time when the red ax should seal her doom. Surrey loved Mary. He had told me as much, and on this account he hated Queen Bess.

I turned suddenly upon the silent Jean.

"Jean," said I, "we journey to London. We are going into the den of the lioness. We set out this very night. See that everything is made ready, and lock up the secret of our going in your brain."

With willingness he eagerly promised to do my bidding, and that night I bade adieu to Castle Miramont, never to see it again till I had passed through some of the most thrilling adventures that ever fell to the lot of man.

Traveling incognito as much as possible, we reached London a few days later and almost at high noon. I was astonished to see the streets crowded and lavishly decorated. As we turned into Cheapside the crowds were crushing.

"What means all this?" I asked a lout who elbowed me insultingly.

"The Queen is going to the Tower," he snapped and, with a smirk, turned away.

Sure enough the Queen was being escorted to the grim Tower with all the magnificence of the day. Cheapside blazed with tapestries and gold brocade. Flags and pennons canopied the streets, bells pealed, the conduits ran wine, and the people were shouting themselves hoarse. At the head of the pageant rode Leicester, the favorite of the time, his gorgeous armor flashing in the sun, as royal-looking a personage as the Queen herself. Involuntarily I laid my hand on my sword when I caught sight of this mischief-maker, and I longed to run him through.

The Queen herself, reclining in her gilded car, was splendidly dressed and well berouged. She was never beautiful, this jealous, irritable Tudor spawn. Her costumes could not make up for her homeliness, and while I looked at her my thoughts flitted to the beautiful woman who, caged in old Fotheringay, was waiting for the block.

"Come!" cried I, whirling upon Jean, "this is poison in the Tournay blood. Let us fare to Surrey House," and we edged out of the crush and journeyed to my destination.

I was burning to see Cecil Surrey, to know what need he had of my sword. The shouts of the overruled rabble died away and we were at last shut of the discord.

Surrey House was one of the most noted private establishments in London. I knew its every turn. I had feasted in its superb halls and slept in its tapestried chambers. I had made love to Surrey's sister, Elenora, the "Surrey Rose," as she was called, and had fancied that my suit had not been unwelcome. When I reached the main doorway of the great house the portal swung inward before I could knock and I stood before my friend.

"Welcome, Tournay!" cried Cecil, thrusting out his ungloved hand. "I knew you would come. But you look flustered," and a smile overspread his handsome face.

"I have a right to be flustered," cried I, feeling my temples mantle with a flush. "I have just seen the slaves of London bowing to their mistress."

"Yes," he answered, "the Queen rides to the Tower today. I had almost forgotten it," and I was drawn into the great parlor and a hearty repast was ordered for me.

While it was being prepared, Surrey talked rapidly. I could see by his face that he was eager to unburden himself.

"You complete the company," said he. "The pot is boiling and the plot is complete."

"The plot, you say?"

"Aye, the plot that will snatch Mary Stuart from the ax and save her for England and her native land."

As I have said, I thought as much.

"You will not fail us?" he went on. "I know you will not. We are going to break the power of Elizabeth and rescue the Rose of Scotland. She has been condemned, as you know. She stands now in the shadow of the block, and Leicester and Essex are trying to put into Elizabeth's hand the pen for the death warrant. For years and years Mary Stuart has not breathed the air of freedom. Her doom is certain unless we save her. Her right to the crown of England is as good as Queen Bess's. The blood in Mary's veins is as rich as any that ever flowed through the heart of a Tudor."

"I subscribe to that," cried I. "But who are with us in this holy undertaking?"

"We have with us Sussex, Montjoy, Lancaster and Captain Comas."

I started at mention of the last name.

"Captain Comas?" I echoed. "Is he not the swashbuckler whom I breasted one night at the Pope's Inn?"

"The same, my dear Tourney."

"I liked not his face then, and I fear I shall not fancy him now."

"Captain Comas is all right now. I'll stand good for him. He has a fertile brain and is rich in suggestion. Then, you know his sword is one of the best and behind it is the strongest arm in England."

I did not like this praise, but beating down my desire to say as much, I let Surrey rattle on.

"You shall meet all the comrades this night," said he. "They are to assemble here. You shall be free to give your opinions and to renew acquaintance with Captain Comas."

The meal was a most delightful one. While I ate ravenously, for I was really hungry, Surrey returned to our escapades in London until I almost forgot my present visit.

"But Queen Mary?" I said, suddenly interrupting him.

"Oh, yes. We must not forget her," was the reply. "We have paved the way for our great exploit. We are going to get into Fotheringay, despite the guards, and some morning Elizabeth will wake up and find the bird flown."

"Good! if it can be so!"

"It will be so," put in Surrey at once. "Love laughs at locksmiths and——"

"But if we fail?"

"The block, of course. There is to be no failure." He laid his hand on my shoulder. "If no other way, our good blades will hew the way to Mary Stuart. I have sworn by the blood of my ancestors not to turn back till the Rose of Scotland is out of the death toils, even if we have to walk over the body of the Virgin Queen."

His words went through me like sharpened knives, and for several minutes I could not compose myself. As soon as I did we clasped hands and swore to rescue the doomed Queen of Scotland or perish.

CHAPTER II.

ELENORA.

IN THE meantime I was made aware by certain sounds that my servant, Jean, was having a merry time with the holden cooks and maids in the kitchen. Now and then the notes of his flute reached my ears, for he was not only a great beau, but a fellow of musical attainments as well.

When I had finished my repast Cecil conducted me to the sumptuous library on an upper floor and left me, saying that he would return in an hour. I began to feel at home in Surrey House. I soon observed that the young Earl had not cut loose from all his old habits, for pipes and tobacco littered the table, and a sweeping glance revealed the locked sideboard in the wall.

I was about to fill an Oriental pipe when I heard a door open gently behind my chair. I rose instantly and upon turning around came face to face with Lady Elenora.

I had not seen her for three years, but this does not mean that she had been absent from my thoughts. Now, as I stood before her, my heart beat faster than ever, for Elenora of Surrey House was truly an object of adoration. She was slightly above the medium height and the possessor of a supple figure that was grace itself. Her fascinating brown eyes were portals to her virgin soul and the soft dark tresses, brushed back from her lofty brows, gave her a regal appearance. I was studying her charms of face and form when she came forward with a little peal of laughter.

"Welcome to Surrey House, Sieur de la Tournay!" she exclaimed, impetuously thrusting out her hands, "time has dealt gently with you. France, no doubt, contains the fountain of perpetual youth."

"No more than does England," I answered, finding my tongue at last.

A deep flush of gratification overspread her face.

"Cecil had not told me of your arrival," she resumed. "But when I peeped into the scullery to see what the din was, I discovered a man whose face had a familiar look."

"My servant, Jean."

"Yes, I recognized him at length. But Cecil has deserted you and I will have to entertain. My brother has fallen into strange whims of late. It is difficult to rouse him from the melancholy into which he has descended. Did he not send for you, Sieur de la Tournay?"

The question was so direct that it was impossible to avoid it.

"I came to London at Cecil's request," I replied. "We have been friends a long time, you know."

"But to send for you just now!" Elenora exclaimed, and then she seemed to think that she had taken a hasty step. "Why not tell you what I have observed of late? My brother has strange guests, Sussex, Lancaster, Montjoy, and an adventurer whom they call Captain Comas. Trouble is ahead when men of such stuff congregate. They assemble in the red room when they come together. Unwittingly I overheard a few words the other night. There is evil afoot. These men have drawn Cecil into some sort of snare. London just now is full of conspiracies against the Queen, and especially so since Mary of Scotland has been condemned. I am glad you have come, Sieur de la Tournay. I am sure of your assistance in releasing Cecil from the machinations of these lords of darkness."

What could I say? How could I answer this beautiful girl, when I was already in the plot and had sworn with Surrey to save Mary Stuart from the paws of the crowned lioness of Tudor? My gaze sought the floor and I trembled from head to foot. All the time Lady Elenora was watching me, trembling like myself.

"I know but little of the first persons you have mentioned," I said. "But this I do know: I cannot give Captain Comas a clean bill of morals."

"He looks like a swashbuckler and I am sure he is but a bully and a braggart. He is the last man whom I would trust with a secret."

"I know him well. I should have run him through when I had him at the point of my rapier in the Cardinal's Hat."

"The pity is that you did not," and the eyes of Lady Elenora seemed to emit sparks of fire.

With this she crossed the room and, drawing aside the rich curtains of one of the oriel windows, stood there pensively gazing out over London. I regarded her for a few moments and then stole to her side.

"Look!" said she, pointing to the west. "See how London is decorated. The Queen goes to the Tower today."

"I got a glimpse of her majesty on my road hither," I responded. "It was a stately procession, with Leicester at its head."

Her proud lips curled, which told me better than words could have done that she had no regard for the court favorite.

"Yonder," continued Eleanor, "is Fotheringay. You can just discover its turrets above the trees. There dwells the Queen of Scots. She is the fly in Queen Bess's ointment."

"And an unhappy fly at that."

"Sieur de la Tournay," suddenly answered Elenora, turning upon me. "Are not these secret meetings here in Mary's interest?"

"They may have a significance in that direction," I said guardedly.

"If so, it means the doom of the cabal," fell from her lips. "Intriguing as Mary has been, my heart at times goes out to her. She may be reaping the whirlwind of past misdeeds, but she is so beautiful and so pleasing of manners that I abhor her captivity."

"She has been condemned."

"But the Queen has not yet affixed her signature to the death warrant. Mary Stuart should not hope on this account. One of these days Queen Bess will perform the act and then—the ax!"

I was looking at her steadily.

"If the Queen of Scotland could be rescued——"

"You must not think of it, Sieur de la Tournay," she broke in impulsively. "It cannot be. Why, Mary is guarded day and night. She is not out of sight of her watchers a single moment. to be another Lady Jane Grey. I were the Queen of England—but why talk of such dark things? Is it not pleasant in your fair France? There must be flowers about Miramont Castle."

"There are," I replied. "When I came away I passed through our gardens and found all the flowers asleep."

"Here we shiver in the cruel winds of December." She shrugged her shoulders as she spoke. "I have longed to see France, Sieur de la Tournay. I know it must be a paradise just now."

All my love for this fair one rose in my heart as she finished.

"France," cried I, "is not so far away but that you may see it. I am sure Castle Miramont would welcome you, Elenora."

Her cheeks at once got crimson; the blood mounted to her temples, but she did not withdraw the hand I had taken.

"If you will become my wife, dear one, all the pleasures of Miramont shall be yours, and with it the devotion of one who has long held you in his heart."

Her deep flushes came and went. I felt the white hand tremble in mine.

"You know not what you say," she exclaimed, half averting her noble face. "Was it for this that you journeyed from France?"

"Not for this," I answered. "But I cannot keep back the story of my love."

"Meseems this is not the time for such declaration. You are here, I know, to save my brother from the cabal which has him in its power. You must do this, Sieur de la Tournay."

"And win his displeasure?"

"Even his hatred."

Once again I was at my wits' ends.

"Look at the cloud that now hovers over the Tower," she suddenly exclaimed, drawing my attention away from her face. "It is portentous. The Queen must be there by now. We shall have the news from Quasimondo, for I see him coming now."

Her tapering finger described a figure bounding toward the house, and with her I watched it in silence.

"Who is Quasimondo?" I presently asked.

"We did not have him here when you were last in Surrey House," she replied. "Ah, he is inside now. I hear his feet on the staircase. Let us go and meet him."

We passed from the room and suddenly encountered a dwarfish, misshapen figure at the top of the stair. A pair of lustrous eyes centered themselves upon Lady Elenora a moment and then riveted their baleful light upon me.

"What is the news?" asked Elenora. "You seem to have something to communicate, Quasimondo."

The dwarf removed his repellent gaze from me.

"The Queen rode to the Tower," he exclaimed. "There were great throngs of people in the street. The royal horsemen had to beat their way through them, and some were grievously hurt. And now and then a voice cried out for the hated Stuart and asked the Queen why she didn't take her head."

"The rabble!" almost hissed Elenora.

"Aye, if I were Queen Bess I'd have their heads for that," the dwarf flashed, digging his long nails into his darkish palms. "I said so to Captain Comas——"

"And what did the Captain say?" I put in.

"He bade me hold my tongue, the lout, whereat I promptly challenged him."

A smile crossed Lady Elenora's features.

"Methinks that would be a battle between giant and pygmy," said she.

"Not so much so as you think, mistress," and Quasimondo put on an air of self glorification. "Some day I will lay my blade across the Captain's face and then we will have it out."

With this outburst of spleen Lady Elenora dismissed the dwarf, and he left us alone.

Ten minutes later Elenora, on pretense of a forgotten errand, took leave of me and I was about to return to the library when I chanced to cast my eyes down the staircase.

At the foot of it I beheld Quasimondo glaring up at me with all the fiendishness of a hyena, but the moment he was espied he vanished like a vapor. And all at once the thought came over me that some day not far distant I would have to deal with this imp of Satan.

CHAPTER III.

AT THE CARDINAL'S HAT.

BETWEEN two fires—my oath with Cecil Surrey and my love for the Lady Elenora—I found myself confronted by the most perplexing dilemma of my life. Should I remain in the conspiracy against Elizabeth I stood to lose the lady of my heart, and should I withdraw, the displeasure, if not the hatred, of Surrey would ever follow me. I seemed on the eve of shipwreck between Scylla and Charybdis.

As night drew on Jean asked to be permitted to indulge in a little lark with one of the scullions, a handsome fellow named Pietro, and, as no better servant ever existed, I gladly gave permission.

To Ledger Readers

We strongly recommend "FOR SCOTLAND'S QUEEN; or, HEARTS AND SWORDS," in this issue. Read it and see how war and love and intrigue of the old days contrast with the same sort of things of today. Next week's leader will be entitled, "THE BIDDLESTONE MYSTERY; or, IN THE HOUSE OF FEAR," a peculiarly strange and thrilling story. It will be followed by a strong sea story, entitled, "WHAT 'BOOZE' BROUGHT ME; or, BRAWN AND THE BLUE BRINE." It will grip you. We have a lot of big, splendid stories awaiting publication in the Ledger, the best that money will buy. Keep the Ledger coming regularly and don't be lonesome. It will entertain and cheer you.

"We have several unoccupied hours on our hands," said Sir Cecil, "and I propose a little expedition to the Cardinal's Hat. I am quite sure we will not encounter any old acquaintance, and old Samson, who served you last, has failing sight, though his wines are as good as ever."

We set out immediately after I had given consent to his proposition.

The Cardinal's Hat was one of the most famous taverns in London. It was a great rendezvous for the younger nobility and untitled men about town, a large, roomy stone house with a red wooden hat suspended from an iron bar over the door.

Whilst we pursued our way to this place, destined to become the scene of an adventure still fresh in my mind, I recalled our last visit there, when we were set upon by a lot of beruffled gentry and forced to fight for our lives. On that occasion I had the point of my rapier at the throat of Captain Comas, and my regret had since been that I had not run him through.

Surrey was strangely moody till we reached the inn.

"Here we are," he broke in cheerily. "It's the same old place, Henri, only the hat needs fresh paint and Samson new eyes," and with this he pulled the heavy leathern latchstring and opened the door.

It was indeed the "same old place." I recognized the heavy settles, the sanded floor and the oval tables dispersed about the room. A lamp of ancient design swung from the ceiling and on the walls were portraits of Queen Bess in her maidenhood and of bluff King Hal in hunting costume. Several of the tables were occupied, and our entrance seemed to have been unobserved.

Surrey led the way to a table rather apart from the rest, and ordered his favorite wine. Samson came forward and greeted my companion merrily. All at once he cast his eyes in my direction and burst out in assumed pleasure.

"Ah," he cried to Surrey, "I have not seen our friend for a long time."

"Not," thought I, "since we made a shambles of the Cardinal's Hat."

"The old rat hasn't lost his teeth at any rate," I whispered, leaning towards Surrey, "and I'll warrant that his teeth are as sharp as ever."

By this time Samson had reached one of the other tables, and I noticed that he bent over the shoulder of one of its occupants whose back was turned towards us and whispered something in his ear. The man on the stool shot a swift glance in our direction and, brief as it was, I saw in it not only recognition, but a flash of vengeance.

Involuntarily I felt to see that my blade was loose in its fastenings, for there was trouble in that lightning look.

I had scarcely time to breathe when the fellow bolted to his feet, overturning his stool, and whirled upon us. The light fell full upon his face. It was the face of one of my old-time antagonists and I saw on his left cheek the scar my blade had left with the Tournay compliments. He was a roaring lion hot for combat.

"The French snake has come back," I heard him cry, "Come, my good fellows, let us pay off some old scores and rid England of him."

Surrey and I were on our feet before the words had left his wine-stained lips. The others leaped from their stools, and in a flash six swords were glistening where they stood. Surrey and I saw the danger of the moment, and left our table. As I fell back towards a narrow doorway I jerked one of the settles from its slight moorings and forced it in front of us as a rampart. Bolt the door I knew they would, and a nimble little man who had apparently been asleep against the wall sprang across the room for that very purpose. We now had six blades in our faces.

I glanced swiftly at old Samson, who was grinning on his perch, rather proud of the fact that he had started the melee. If the old rat had been within reach of my arm I would have marked him for life, though I knew that it was impossible to spoil his beauty, for he was more beast than man.

I felt that the rascals could not get over our breastwork without some bloody work, and when I looked at Cecil I saw that he was ready for the fray.

My old enemy, who was known as Berwick, the Red, a soi-distant earl, was frothing at the mouth, and the scar on his cheek was a bright crimson. They came at us en masse, as boisterous as a pack of Siberian wolves, and we saw their blades almost at our throats.

"Down with both of them!" yelled Berwick, but the next moment they were stopped at the barricade.

There was very little space between us, and the old settle took that up. I looked calmly into the faces of the horde, knowing that if ever I had needed a steady arm it was then. One of the foremost, a giant in stature, lunged at me, but I caught his blade dexterously with my own, and nearly twisted it from his grasp. The following second I drove my own steel through his shoulder and sent him back with a howl of pain. This only opened the fight, for we had the whole lot thrusting at us with the fury of demons, and it took all our skill to keep them off.

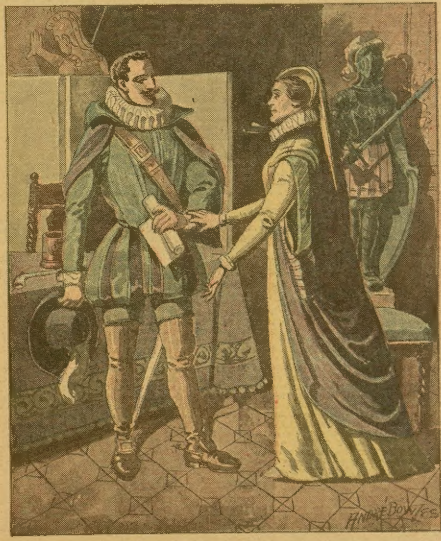
All at once there came a furious pounding on the door, a babel of voices ensued, and the youth drew back the bolts to let in another set like the first. The newcomers seemed to take in the situation at a glance, more swords were drawn, and now we had fully a dozen in our front. To fight such a band was purely folly.

"We must fly," I heard Surrey say. "It is not cowardice to get out of this infamous trap."

"You are right," I responded. "The only way is by the door behind us."

"If it be not locked."

I swept my blade before the leering countenances, cutting one fellow well and deep, and then threw myself against the portal. To my joy and surprise it yielded instantly, and Cecil and I bolted away.



"He looks like a swashbuckler."

I should have said ere this that the taproom was on the second floor, and that at the end of the corridor into which we plunged was a staircase leading to the gardens below. The night was crisp and starlight and, added to this, a lamp partly lighted the scene. I had closed the door upon entering the hallway and had heard the snap of the lock. As I plunged down the steps I almost collided with a young girl who uttered a cry, and drew towards the railings.

"Get out of my way, wench!" I shouted. "This is no place for one of your ilk."

The next instant I regretted my speech, for the girl was wondrously beautiful, and as Cecil bolted past me I gripped her arm.

"Where is the garden gate?" I demanded. "We have been outmatched by the wolves inside and——"

"A foolish thing I would be to aid one who calls Bess Butterfly a wench," she answered.

"Do you live in the inn?"

"Where else should I live?" she responded.

"You're pretty, girl, and there'll be a kiss for your help."

At this her temper lowered, and she smirked pleasantly.

"Oh," she said, "I know ye now. You are the young Frenchman who tipped me so generously a few years ago."

"That I am, Bess, and there shall be a better tip if you show us the gate."

All this time the caged ones inside were assaulting the door, and every moment I thought it would be wrenched from its hinges.

"Yonder is the gate," said Bess, pointing across the garden. "But you must be swift if you would escape."

I threw the girl a handful of coin and darted after Cecil.

That very moment the door fell outward, and I saw the pack on the stair.

The foremost ones caught me at the bottom, where a protruding rail interfered with further progress, and I was forced to turn and fight.

There was a rapid play of swords. I thrust out with all the vengeance I could command, catching one fellow under the chin and toppling him back upon his companions, then I dealt with another who fared no better, while the horrified girl, crouched nearby, was shivering in her terror.

Cecil, seeing my peril, came back and added his good steel to the exciting melee. It was a furious battle, for the rascals were determined to finish us there and then, and, but for our excellent sword-play, they would have succeeded. I felt a cut across my temple and knew that blood had been drawn. This only maddened me, and, with a last thrust which brought out a wild shriek, I turned and bounded across the open.

"Run! run! and may heaven protect you!" I heard the girl cry, and when I glanced back I saw that she had thrown herself before the scoundrels and was striving to hold them back.

We gained the gate and then the street. Here and there a cresset burned and lighted our way.

"I'll reward Bess Butterfly some time," said I when I caught my breath. "She's worth her weight in gold. The apothecary will have a time fixing some of those fellows up," and, with laugh, we hastened towards Surrey House.

We had bested our assailants after all, but I was destined to discover that our battle at the Cardinal's Hat was to have an aftermath, and that I had not seen the last of Bess Butterfly.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE TOILS.

FIVE days elapsed before I again ventured from Surrey House. I had met those whom Cecil called his "friends," Sussex, Lancaster, Montjoy and Captain Comas.

To the last meeting they had brought with them another man called Putney, the only person of the lot to whom I was favorably disposed. He had an open, honest face, a bright eye and a strong arm. How the others had drawn him into the conspiracy I could not conceive. Meantime I had seen but little of Lady Elenora and could not tell whether her absence was accidental or by design.

My rooms in Surrey House were in the west wing, commodious affairs, upholstered in the prevailing style. They overlooked a part of London which was rich in history. I could see the Thames, dotted with craft of every description, and now and then the waving banners of some procession. It was a pretty view, but it galled me to think that over it all reigned the enemy of Mary Stuart.

Rumors of every description filtered into Surrey House from the outer world. Now the Queen had signed the death warrant and again she had withheld her royal hand.

I was like a bird in a cage. I longed to fly to the fields, to have more adventures suited to my blood, but here I was cooped up without even Lady Elenora to keep me company.

On the afternoon of the fifth day there came a soft rap on my door and upon opening it I stood face to face with young Putney.

I greeted him heartily, for I needed companionship, and he stole in, shutting the door behind him.

"I have come hither, Sieur de la Tournay," said he, settling into a chair, "to see you and you alone. You know what I am to do?"

Well did I know. He was to get into Fotheringay Castle and pave the way for Queen Mary's rescue. If I had had the choosing myself, I could have selected no better man for the desperate business. Vetus Putney was to get into the graces of the guards and, if possible, see the royal captive herself and prepare her for the work in hand. All London knew that Mary was well guarded, that her watchers were sleepless, that their heads would pay the forfeit of laxity, and that they were constantly watched by paid spies.

Young Putney was quite hopeful.

"I've put in an entering wedge,," said he with a boyish smile. "I have been added to the Queen's guards."

My heart leaped into my throat at this intelligence.

"It is a forward step," said I. "You have been lucky beyond my expectations."

"Of course, I do not know what will come of it," he went on. "The captain of the guard is one Opelon, who has but one eye, but, from the look of it, it is as good as two. He is a Burgundian who has long been in Essex's service, a lean, wolfish-looking rascal, who is devoted to Elizabeth."

"Then you will watch him the more closely," I replied. "A one-eyed wolf is always to be suspected."

"In that you are right, Sieur de la Tournay, but I will find a way to pull his teeth," and a smile overspread Putney's face.

"What think you of Captain Comas?" I suddenly inquired.

At this the face before me grew sober.

"A seller-out, if I am a judge," cried my friend. "There isn't a single streak of honesty in his body. He would sell his master for less than Judas received, and he wouldn't hang himself afterward, either."

"My opinion exactly," I confirmed.

"I could have wrung his neck last night at the Cardinal's Hat, when I found him making love to Bess."

"To Bess Butterfly?"

"Yes. I guess I made him understand by a look that I will have none of that impertinence. The girl is good, despite her unfortunate environment, and I am willing to die for her at any time."

"Bess is worth her weight in gold," said I, recalling my last escapade at the inn.

"I had to leave the place to keep my blood down," Putney proceeded. "We must watch this braggart, and it was an evil day when Sir Cecil took him into the plot."

At this Putney uncrossed his legs and, humming a tune, went over to the window and looked out.

"I may be unduly suspicious, Sieur de da Tourney," he said, suddenly whirling on his heel. "What is this imp called Quasimondo doing in Surrey House?"

"He seems to be a fixture here."

"A bit of useless furniture, I take it," was the reply. "I don't like his looks. If I were Lady Elenora or whoever keeps him here, I'd pitch him downstairs even if the fall broke his neck."

"What has happened that you have formed a dislike to Quasimondo?"

"He's the devil's agent, I know he is!" exclaimed Putney. "But yesterday I caught him hobnobbing in secret with Captain Comas. They were as close as two peas in a pod, and that doesn't look good to me."

"Nor to me, either."

"When the talk was ended I followed the dwarf and lo and behold! he went straight to Essex House."

"I don't believe Lady Elenora exactly favors him, but he brings her news from the street."

"News of his own fixing, no doubt," remarked young Putney with bitterness.

"I would not doubt that," I returned.

"Well, I shall keep tab on both Captain Comas and Quasimondo. Our very lives are in this desperate venture, and if we are betrayed it means the block or Tyburn tree."

After Putney's departure I remained indoors till after sunset, when I resolved to venture out. In the lower hall I came suddenly upon Lady Elenora. She was clad in an evening gown which set off the richness of her beauty, and the smile she bestowed upon me sent my heart fluttering in midair, as it were.

"Your keeping-in must be wearisome, Sieur de la Tournay," said she in her musical tones. "I fancy you are about to seek another bout with the habitues of the Cardinal's Hat."

"The last one was not to my liking," I returned. "It is not likely that I will seek another encounter with the wolves of that place."

(Continued on page seventeen.)

GOLD AND THE GIRL

Or, A CATTLE MAN'S GRIT

By WILDER ANTHONY

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CHAPTER III.

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

ON THE north bank of Moon River, the town of Moondance lay sprawled in the shape of an irregular horn. Its original settlers had been men of large ideas, and, having had plenty of space at their disposal, they had used it lavishly. The streets, bordered by dusty, weather-beaten frame buildings, were as wide as those of a State capital; indeed, in area, the town could compete with many a metropolis; but there the resemblance ended. Moondance was not fated to become a great city. The fact that the nearest railroad point was at Sand Bluffs, forty miles away, effectually crushed any ambitions that Moondance might have had to be more than a neighborhood center.

The mixed population was composed of cattle men, sheep men, cowpunchers and herders, with a sprinkling of gamblers and other riff-raff. Rough, uncouth, full-blooded men, these were, for the most part; hard-working; decisive in their likes and dislikes; fearing neither God nor man; they met life as they found it, and faced death with a laugh. They were the last of a disappearing type, picturesque, but lacking in many of the attributes which differentiate mankind from the beasts.

After Wade had stabled his horse and seen it fed, he started up the street in the direction of Moran's office. He was resolved to find out where the agent stood on the sheep question. Save for a few dogs, sleeping in the blaze of the noonday sun, which hung overhead like a ball of fire, the town seemed deserted.

When Wade entered the office, Moran was seated at his desk, chewing upon a cigar, above which his closely cropped, reddish mustache bristled. Like the Senator, he was a man of girth and bulk, but his ape-like ancestry had dowered him with a strength that not even his gross life had been able to wreck, and he was muscularly fit. Except for the miner's hip boots, which he wore, he was expensively dressed, and would have been called tastefully so in the betting ring of a metropolitan racetrack, where his diamond scarf-pin and ring would have been admired.

"Hello!" he boomed, "have a cigar." He pushed a box of an excellent brand toward his visitor, and waved him to a chair. His greeting was noisy rather than cordial.

Wade declined both the chair and the cigar.

"I dropped around to find out why you told Jensen to run his sheep over my range."

"Let me see——" The agent very deliberately lifted his large, white hand and took the cigar from between his lips. "Just what range is that?"

"The upper valley range, which I have under lease."

"Which you have under lease?" Moran affected sarcastic surprise. "I wasn't aware that you had any legal right to that part of the valley. It's Government land, ain't it?"

"Maybe you forgot that you tried to buy the lease from me." The rancher bared his teeth in a grim smile. "We'll not quibble over that. We've got our legal rights, all of us, but we're a long distance from the law here. What I want to know is, will you order Jensen to trail those sheep? Now, wait a moment!"

Moran subsided with a show of good-natured courtesy.

"Think well before you answer. I'm not here to threaten you, but there are desperate men in this valley who will take things into their own hands, if this business is not stopped. There's plenty of grass on the other side of the mountains. Why not take your sheep there?"

"Why should I? The sheep have a right where they are, and they're going to stay. Wade, you cattle men think you own the earth, but when it comes to the show-down you're only bluffers. Now, I made you a proposition, it's true, and I'll make it again. Sell me your homestead and lease rights at the price I offered you—ten thousand dollars—and get out with a whole skin. There isn't room for the two of us."

"Ten thousand dollars, for the homestead and the lease rights, too?" Wade laughed mirthlessly. "You offered me that for the lease alone."

"Did I? I'd forgotten. Anyway, it's a fair offer. The land is still owned by Uncle Sam. You haven't proved up any claims, and you never will, if I can help it. We are spending lots of money here. The Government will see that our interests are protected. Times have changed. You cattle men can't hog the whole of Moon Valley. Well, what do you say?"

The ranchman dismissed the proposition with a gesture, but did not speak again for several moments. Silently, the two faced each other, their glances crossed like rapiers; the cattle man like a statue in bronze, as unalterable as metal, dangerous to trifle with; the agent affecting the half-tolerant amusement, which one may feel for an enemy beneath one's prowess.

"Moran, you're a big man in the East, but you're not big enough for the job you've tackled here. I've held my friends back as long as I can—longer than I thought for—and when they break loose, this valley will be a hell, a shambles. Men will be killed about here, maybe you'll be one of them. Against that time, once more, I warn you. Tell Jensen to trail those sheep!"

"Good night!" the agent called after Wade, in the vernacular of Broadway, as the latter swung on his heel and strode out of the office.

In the street, Wade chanced upon a neighboring cattle owner, Lem Trowbridge of the Star and Crescent outfit, who fell into step with him.

"Gordon, how long are we to stand for this thing, eh? Say, do you know what's being whispered about you? Now, I'm your friend, and you take it from me that you've gone far enough with your pacification theories."

"That I'm afraid, eh?" Suddenly Wade stopped to face Trowbridge. "Have they said that to you?"

"To me? Say, what kind of a friend do you think I am?" Trowbridge flamed in ready anger. "No, but I've heard something of the sort, and I don't like it."

"Well, if you hear it direct, send the man on to me with it," said Wade, his teeth clicking ominously together. "I'm about through, Lem, not quite, but pretty nearly through. I've told him to have Jensen trail those sheep, and if he doesn't——"

Trowbridge nodded and smiled, as they paused at a street crossing, one of the few such which Moondance possessed.

"That's the idea, Gordon. We'll all be the readier for the waiting. Well, I'll not go further with you." He winked with elaborate precision, and threw back his head in the direction of a snug little cabin, with flowers in the windows, a biscuit throw away. "She's home. I just saw her come out of the store yonder."

Wade blushed like a boy and looked foolish.

"I don't get in so very often," he said, yielding before Trowbridge's hearty slap.

"You don't need to apologize for liking Dorothy," said Lem, moving off. "She's put Moondance on God's own map."

Eager though Wade was to get to the little cabin, the nearer he approached to it, the slower he walked, fuming at himself for his own sudden spinelessness. Although not a ladies' man, he had never been woman wary until lately; an ominous sign, the significance of which he was far from realizing. When he was with Dorothy Purnell, he almost forgot her sex in the easy companionability of their relationship; when away from her, he thought no more of her than he might of some man friend; but the approach had become a matter of embarrassing difficulty with him. There had even been occasions when he had walked past the cabin and ridden out of Moondance without seeing her, trying to speciously convince himself that such had all along been his intention.

Something of the sort might have happened now had she not hailed him cheerily from the doorway.

"Where bound, stranger?" she smilingly demanded, in her low, rich contralto. "Better come in where it's cool. Mother'll be glad to see you, and I—shan't mind."

She had come to Moondance for the restorative effect of the bracing mountain air upon the health of her mother, who was threatened with nervous invalidism, following upon the death of Mr. Purnell, the year before. The town called them Easterners, because their home was so far east as Michigan, but they had never been city dwellers, as Dorothy's fresh complexion and lithe, alert figure bore witness.

Her chestnut hair, piled in a silken crown on her shapely head, shaded a face that made those who saw it for the first time catch their breath in instant admiration. Her radiance was of a glorious, compelling, and wholly distinct type, as refreshing as some view of green mountains from out of a gloomy canyon. She had eyes, blue in repose, but shading to violet tints when aglow with vivacity; her nose was not perfect, because a trifle tip-tilted, but the countenance gained character through the defect; her very red mouth held most delicious allurement in its slightly full curves. Her hands and feet were small enough to pay tribute to her birth and breeding, but not so small as to be doll-like. She wore a simple, white gown, freshly laundered, which made her look cool and inviting.

"You shan't mind? Now that's good of you, and no mistake." Wade shook hands with her, slowly relinquishing her cool palm. "How is your mother? Better?"

"Oh, yes. I think so. You're better, aren't you, mother?" she asked, as they entered the cozy living-room of the cabin, where the temperature was in grateful contrast to the outer heat. "The air up here does you good, doesn't it?"

Mrs. Purnell, a dispirited-looking little person, admitted that she was better, and seemed cheered by the visit of Wade, who treated her deferentially, but with easy geniality. She liked him for his wholesomeness, and had frequently said that he was worth all the doctors in the country, because of the impression of health and optimism which he bore with him. But she was aware that Dorothy liked him, too, and so presently made an excuse to leave them together.

"Now, you may tell me all about what's worrying you," the girl said, seating herself across from Wade. "Something is. You can't keep the signs from me."

"Good girl!" His voice held a suggestion of tenderness, as he lighted a cigarette, in the home-like privilege which they allowed him there. "That's your way, always. No matter who's in trouble, you are ready to hasten to the rescue."

"Oh——" she deprecatingly began, with a trace of violet showing in her eyes, which meant more than merely casual interest in him.

"No wonder every man in the valley considers himself your own, especial knight."

"I thought maybe I could help you," she said briskly, to cover her sentimental moment. "But that was foolish of me, too, wasn't it? The idea of any one helping you."

"I'm likely to need all my friends soon, Dorothy. I came in to see Race Moran. There's a big band of sheep on our upper range, and Jensen, who is herding them, admitted to me this morning that Moran is behind him."

"Goodness, more sheep? Wherever do they come from?"

"I don't know where they come from, but they can't stay where they are, that's certain." In a few words, he explained to her the significance of the movement, and told her of his talk with Moran. "I've no use for the man," he concluded, "and if it comes to a show-down between him and me, he need expect no sympathy. I've held back as long as I can. I understand better than he does what the crack of the first rifle must mean."

"You've not liked him since you found that he took that photograph of me," she said whimsically. "I didn't mind, but I can't imagine what he wanted with it."

Wade's face darkened.

"It was a confounded impertinence, whatever he wanted with it. But my dislike of him goes farther back than that."

"What are you going to do?" she asked, resting her chin in her hand, and looking him straight in the eyes, as she always did those with whom she talked.

"It largely depends on him. Santry—you know how hot-headed he is—would run the herders away at gun-point and kill off the sheep. As a last resort, we may have to do something like that, but I want to whip these fellows without bloodshed, if we can. A faction war, in the end, would ruin us all."

"You must be careful," the girl said earnestly. "Moran is not going to be an easy man to handle. He seems to have plenty of money, and they say here in town that he stands in with the Government; that he has some sort of 'pull.' He's clever, I think. He'll trick you, if he can."

"I'm sure of that, Dorothy, but we're not going to let him. If only—— Say, do you know something else that is being said in this town? Something that they're saying about me?"

"Something nice?" Her tone was archly inquiring.

He leaned forward and lightly rested his hand upon her knee, just as he might have done with a man friend, and she took as little notice of it. His fingers were trembling under the stress of the emotion he felt.

"They're saying, those who don't like me, I guess, that I'm afraid of Moran and his crowd; afraid of a lot of sheep-herders. No, of course, my friends don't believe it," he hastened to add, when she seemed likely to interrupt. "But it's not doing me any good, especially now that public feeling is running so high."

"But you mustn't mind what is said, Gordon. That's part of the courage your friends know that you have; to do what you feel to be right, no matter what is said."

Her cheeks were glowing with indignation, and he appreciatively patted her hand before sitting erect in his chair again. It was no wonder, he reflected, in that almost womanless land, that many a cowpuncher rode the range by night, seeing her image in every star. The thought that each single man, and many a married one, in Moondance, would ride into the Pit itself to win one of her smiles, had been Wade's comfort, against the possibility of bloodshed between the two hostile factions. But now, in the moment of her sympathy for him, he felt that he could not be content without some further assurance of her safety.

"What you say sounds well, Dorothy, but my pride's working on me, too, now. I can't help it. If my friends, who have accepted my leadership so far, should lose their heads and go to it without me, I might talk afterward until Kingdom come. I'd never convince anybody that I hadn't funked the thing. You spoke a while back of helping me. You can help me a great deal."

Her lovely face blazed with eagerness.

"Can I? How?"

"By promising me that, if it comes to a fight, you and your mother will come out to my ranch. You'd be safer there. That is, unless you'd prefer to leave Moondance altogether."

"Indeed, I shouldn't prefer to leave Moondance. But——" She smiled reassuringly. "I'm sure we'd be safe enough here, unless mother became frightened. Of course, if you'd feel better about it, we would come to the ranch."

"Thanks. I do feel better about it, more free to show my hand. You might be safe enough, of course, but cheap whisky has led many a good man astray."

"If there were only some peaceable way out of it!" Her eyes grew anxious at the thought of danger to him. "Can't you telegraph Washington, or something?"

"Washington doesn't know whether Moondance is in the United States or in Timbuctoo," laughingly said Wade. "If we had an official of the Government here, we might make him understand, but Mahomet will never come to these mountains, and they can't go to Mahomet. Why, what's the matter?"

His question was prompted by the sudden elation with which she had clapped her hands and sprung to her feet.

"How stupid of me, Gordon, to have forgotten." She stood over him with shining eyes and eager countenance, as lovely as a lorelei. "There is an official of the Government here—now—at this moment."

"Here? In Moondance?" he exclaimed in amazement. "Who is it?"

"Senator Rexhill." Wade stared vacuously at her as she ran rapidly on with the news. "He came in with his daughter last night, on the stage from Sand Bluffs. Isn't that glorious? You must go up to see him at once."

"I will, of course," Wade said slowly. "And with pleasure. It's been some while since I've seen either of them."

"You know them—him?" Dorothy hesitated over which pronoun to use, with the ungrateful reflection that Helen Rexhill was a most distinguished looking person. "That will make it all the easier," she added, generously.

"Of course, he has no authority of his own in such a matter, you know. But if we can get him interested, he might wake them up in Washington in our behalf. Only, I don't see what can have brought him to Moondance."

"Do you—do you know the daughter well?" Dorothy asked, with feminine cogency. "I suppose you met her back East?"

"We've known each other for a number of years." He arose, his face expressive of the delight he felt at their presence in the town. "We are quite good friends. You'll like her. But it's strange they didn't let me know they were coming. You'll pardon me, if I hurry up to the hotel, won't you, Dorothy?"

She really urged him out of the house.

"Of course! Don't waste a moment, and let me know just as soon as you can what the outcome is." She laughed bravely into his face, although in her gaze lurked a secret that another woman would have been quick to read.

"Good-by. I want you to meet them right away," he called over his shoulder.

When he looked back for her response, she nodded brightly.

CHAPTER IV.

TREACHERY.

OVERJOYED at the prospect of a peaceful solution of the problem which confronted him, Wade walked rapidly toward the hotel, happy, too, in the thought of meeting Helen Rexhill.

Whether he loved her with the single-hearted devotion which a man should feel toward his future wife, he was not quite sure; but he was confident that he did not love any one else. The idea of love, in connection with Dorothy, had never occurred to him; she was his good friend, nothing more. To Helen belonged the romance of his life, fostered in other years by the distinct preference she had shown for him. At one time, they had been reported engaged, and although the word had never passed between them, many things more significant than speech had contributed to the warm regard which they felt for each other. Beneath Helen's reputed coldness of heart lay intense feeling, and on numerous occasions she had verged on unwomanliness in baring her moods to Wade, in a way that other men would have been quicker to fathom, and perhaps to take advantage of, than he had been.

Now, the knowledge that she was close at hand, and that he might see her at any moment, caused his heart to beat rapidly. If to others she had been cool, to him she had been ardent, and this warmth had been the one thing needful to make her physically captivating. Only when some vital cause impends is a young man likely to distinguish between the impulses of his body and the cravings of his soul, and no such vital exigency had yet appeared in Wade's life. He wondered if she would be as beautiful as ever, and began to reproach himself for the lack of ardor in his recent letters to her, lest he should now be repaid in kind. He wanted to be received upon the old, delicious footing, with her in his arms, and her lips trembling beneath his.

There were dozens in Washington who would have bartered their immortal souls for such privilege, and so Wade need not be decried for his moment of passionate yearning. He was enough of a man to let it bide upon his interview with the Senator, which was his first purpose. He felt sure that if Senator Rexhill could be moved to interest in the matter of the sheep-herding, his influence would be potent enough to secure redress for the cattle men, and Wade meant to pull every string that could bear upon so happy a result. He was glad that Mrs. Rexhill had not made the journey, for he was conscious of her hostility to him, and felt that his chances were better without her.

When he inquired at the hotel, he was told that the Rexhills were in, and presently found himself in the presence of the Senator, who greeted him with effusive warmth.

"Helen is changing her gown and will be in shortly. I'm mighty glad to see you." He seized the young man's hand in a hearty grip. "Only this morning, we were saying that we must look you up. How are you? Sit down, sit down!"

"Senator," said Wade, after they had exchanged commonplaces for a few moments, "glad as I am to see you, on my own account, I am more glad in behalf of my friends, who have not yet had the pleasure of meeting you. Your arrival in Moondance could not possibly have been more opportune. You have come just in time to save us, most likely, from an internecine strife that must have ruined us all. I was more happy than I can tell you to learn that you were here."

"Ineed, Gordon? I—I am much interested. Perhaps you will——"

While Wade succinctly sketched the situation, the Senator nervously toyed with his eyeglasses, now and then lifting his double chin from the confinement of his collar, only to let the mass of flesh settle again into inertness. He thought rapidly. Evidently, Moran had done well in not letting the fact be known that he, the Senator, was concerned in Moon Valley enterprises. Certainly, Moran had done very well in that, and Rexhill wished that he had been less precipitate in coming to Moondance. If he had stayed in the East, his complicity in the affair might possibly have been concealed to the very end. He considered the advisability of remaining under cover, but now that he was on the ground, he decided that he had best be open and aboveboard, in so far as he could be so. It would be awkward in the event of subsequent investigation, if he should be made to appear in the light of a deliberate fugitive.

So, presently, as Wade neared the end of his resume of the situation, Rexhill permitted an oleaginous smile to overspread his countenance. He even chuckled.

"It's really a bit amusing. No, no, not what you have said, my dear fellow, but what I am about to say to you. You invoke my influence to stop these—er—depredations, as you term them, and up to a certain point you shall have my aid, because I seem to see that matters have gotten a bit out of bounds. But when you ask me to go to extremes myself, why I'm bound to tell you that I, too, have interests at stake. Why do you suppose I came out to Moondance?"

"I'll admit that puzzled me."

Rexhill looked keenly at Wade, wondering if he were foolish enough to believe the trip a sentimental journey, purely. He concluded that the young rancher could not be so foolish.

"Well, the reason is——" The Senator leaned ponderously forward, twiddling his glasses upon his thumb. "The reason is that I, if you please, am the moving spirit behind the company which Moran is exploiting. You see——" He chuckled again over Wade's start of surprise. "It's really a bit amusing."

"Then Moran is your agent?"

"In a sense, yes."

"Well, I'm d—d!" The cattle man's tone was rich in disgust, but even more keen was his intense disappointment at this failure of his hopes. "Would you mind telling me just what the purpose of your company is?"

"Certainly. It's no secret," said Rexhill briskly. "Certain parties back East, myself included, as I've told you, have reason to believe that a railroad will be put through this valley very shortly. This is an extremely rich and productive country, with natural resources which will make it the goal of homeseekers, so we are anxious to obtain a portion of the valley for speculative purposes. If the road comes through, we'll probably build a town somewhere nearabouts. If not, we'll use our holdings to raise wheat and livestock. The proposition's worth taking a chance on, either way."

"A little over two years ago," said Wade, "I leased upward of twenty thousand acres of grass land here in the valley. I, personally, filed a homestead claim on six hundred and forty acres. Our lease, which is given by the Government, allows us to use the land as we will, so long as we pay for it.

"Besides ourselves, there are several other ranches on Piah Creek, all of them cow outfits. There has always been a tacit agreement that sheep men should keep to the other side of the mountains because sheep and cattle can't live on the same range. Until your agent came here, we had no trouble whatever. Since then, the sheep have crossed the divide in thousands, until the whole valley is overrun with them.

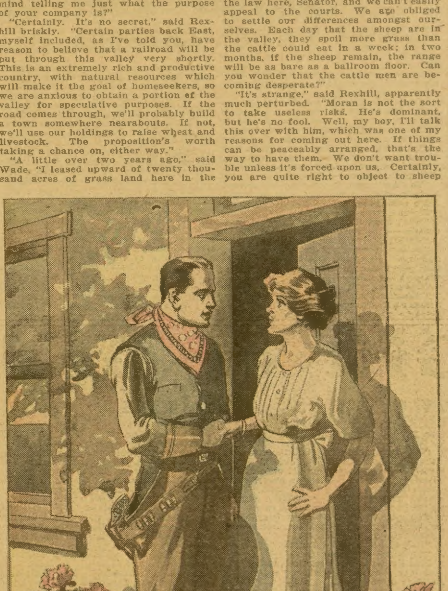
"Moran has admitted to me that the sheep men are acting with his authority and backing. Senator Rexhill, this is wrong, and your agent, or manager, is making a big mistake. Since you are the prime mover in this matter, your arrival is even more opportune than I had thought, because you have power immediately to correct the mistake that is being made. So far as we cattle men can learn, Moran is bringing sheep in here for no other reason than to starve us out. He evidently wants our range and he—I'll not say you—thinks that such a course is the cheapest way to gain possession. He'll find it the dearest in the end. Unless the sheep are taken off the valley range at once, we shall all be mixed up in one of the bloodiest little wars in the history of the cattle country. Mark you, I'm no firebrand. My friends call me too conservative, but we have reached the limit of our forbearance."

Senator Rexhill drummed with his fingers on the table.

"Um! Does Moran know of this attitude in you and your friends, Gordon?"

"Yes. I have told him of it. He refuses to believe or to pay any attention to our claims. We are a long way from the law here, Senator, and we can't easily appeal to the courts. We are obliged to settle our differences amongst ourselves. Each day that the sheep are in the valley, they spoil more grass than the cattle could eat in a week; in two months, if the sheep remain, the range will be as bare as a ballroom floor. Can you wonder that the cattle men are becoming desperate?"

"It's strange," said Rexhill, apparently much perturbed. "Moran is not the sort to take useless risks. He's dominant, but he's no fool. Well, my boy, I'll talk this over with him, which was one of my reasons for coming out here. If things can be peaceably arranged, that's the way to have them. We don't want trouble unless it's forced upon us. Certainly, you are quite right to object to sheep being run in on your leased land. I'll look into it and see what can be done."



Where bound, stranger?"

"Thank you." Wade was much relieved and showed it. "I felt sure that an appeal to your sense of justice would not be fruitless. I'm mighty glad you're here."

"Gordon!" said a girl's voice behind him.

"Helen!" he exclaimed, turning to seize her hands.

Those who admired Helen Rexhill at Washington social functions never saw her look so lovely as in this moment of her meeting with Wade, for the reason that all the skill of the costumer could not beautify her so much as the radiance of love in her countenance. The gown she wore was far from inexpensive, but it was cut with the art which conceals art, and to Wade appeared simple.

Yet his first sensation was one of acute disappointment in her, which he strove a bit ineffectually to conceal. Doubtless, this was because his recollection of her had soared beyond the bounds of human perfection. But the gown, which she had chosen with so keen a wish to impress him, reminded him of the simple dresses which Dorothy wore, and in Helen's Rexhill's face was not the sweet simplicity of nature which distinguished Miss Purnell. Flaming love was there, to transform her from the suggestion of a lily into that of a pomegranate; but it was love that demands and devours, rather than the constant affection which, in giving all, seeks nothing but the privilege of loving, in return. Without the wish to analyze the impression which Helen made upon him, Wade felt something of the truth of this, and was disappointed in the realization of his dream of her. Materially she was too perfect, too exotic, for the setting of Moondance.

"Why, you look just the same," she happily exclaimed. "And do I? Have I changed? Now, be careful what you say! You're not a bit of a courtier."

"Everything changes, doesn't it," he said, slowly feeling his way, "except the heart?" His answer pleased her.

"Will you listen to that, father? In the cattle country, too."

"Very pretty," judiciously observed the Senator. "Inspired, perhaps."

"How long are you going to stay?" asked Wade.

Helen laughed happily.

"Perhaps that will depend upon how glad I think you are to have us."

She gave him a glance of ardent languor, which he was not proof against, nor would any other man have been so.

"No doubt of that." He laughed with her, his disappointment passing before the old love spell, which she knew so well how to cast about him. "You couldn't have come at a better time, either, for now we've some one here who can be company for you. That is," he added, lamely, "when you're tired of me."

"Really?" Helen was a bit chilled by this obvious faux pas. Truly, despite his worth as a man, he was no courtier. "Who is it?"

"Of course, you haven't heard of her, but you'll like her. She's Miss Dorothy Purnell. Everybody does like her."

Helen affected a gayety which she could scarcely have been expected to feel. But, because she was socially adept in pretending her pleasures, Wade felt nothing wrong. Only the Senator twisted his mouth in a dry smile.

"Oh, but I have heard of her, indeed. Mr. Moran sent me a little photograph of you and her on horseback. Just see, how her fame has crossed the continent. I shall be charmed to meet her."

A great light dawned upon Wade.

"Then that was what he wanted with the picture!" he exclaimed. "We wondered. I thought it mighty impudent of him, but of course, if he wanted it just to send to you, that was all right."

In spite of herself, Miss Rexhill's countenance expressed pique, for the implication was manifestly that if Race Moran had wanted the picture for himself, the wish would have been intolerable to the young ranchman.

"Oh, yes, quite all right. You seem——" She checked herself, with the reproach upon her tongue, reflecting that, after all, she was most fond of Wade because of his naturalness. Maxwell Frayne, for instance, was without a peer in spinning graceful phrases, but he spun little else.

"But I don't understand why he sent it to you," Wade whispered to her, as the Senator turned to bend over his Gladstone bag, upon a chair. "Is he—do you—?" A slight rigor of jealousy seemed to seize upon him, under the witchery of her slow smile.

"Oh, he's been writing to me, and I suppose he thought I'd be interested. Of course, I was." She leaned toward him a trifle, a mere swaying of her body, like a lily before a breeze, and impulsively he placed his big hand over hers.

"He'd better not—he'd better stick to business!" Wade said grimly.

She laughed softly, and being human, Wade kissed her, the Senator being still busy with the Gladstone bag.

Thus engaged, none of them had heard a knock at the door, which then opened before Moran, who, even if he did not see the kiss, could not have failed to suspect it from their embarrassed manner. Helen felt from his annoyed expression that he had seen the caress, but if he had, she was rather glad.

He exchanged a casual greeting with Wade, and then while he and Helen continued their talk, the agent spoke in a carefully guarded undertone with his employer. The news he brought, whatever it was, seemed significant, for the Senator appeared worried and presently turned to Wade.

"You'll not mind if I go over to the office with Moran, Gordon?"

"Certainly not, Senator. Don't let me interrupt you. But what's the use of us staying indoors, Helen? The sun's gone down now and it's cooler out. I'll show you something of the metropolis of Moondance. Or, I tell you what we'll do! Why not let me take you now to see Miss Purnell? She'll be mighty glad to meet you."

In any other company Miss Rexhill would likely have resented an invitation to call upon a rival, even apart from the ethics of social calls, but not before Moran. Before him she would not humble Wade, in the least degree, if only because to do so would reflect upon her own preference between the men. She could only pretend to welcome the prospect of going to see Miss Purnell, and make the best of it.

"We may as well stay here now," Rexhill said, when his daughter and Wade had left the room. "When did this happen?"

"I just got word of it," Moran eagerly replied. "Don't you see how it plays right into our hand? It's the greatest thing that could have happened for us. It couldn't be better."

"Are you sure YOU didn't have the man killed?"

Rexhill fixed his eagle-like gaze upon the agent, who assumed an attitude of indignation.

"Why, Senator?"

"Tush! I want to know where we stand. By God, Moran, we mustn't go too far. We're traveling mighty close-hauled now."

"These brawls are likely to happen at any time. Why connect me with it, unnecessarily?"

"All right. Of course, I see your point. The assassin is unknown; suspicion falls naturally upon Wade, who is at the head of the cattle faction. If we can get him in jail his party would likely fall down."

"Exactly!" eagerly cried Moran. "Fortune has placed him in our hands."

"Well, I'm not going to get him in jail," said Rexhill doggedly, "at least, not on any trumped-up charge. He's broken my bread, Helen likes him. Call him a friend. I always play square with my friends—as far as I can. Strategy's strategy, nobody can quarrel with that; but this thing that you propose is something else."

Moran, while listening, had restrained his impatience with difficulty. He not only had reason on his side, but personal hate as well. His sense of triumph in bringing the news to Rexhill had not been for the cause alone; it had seemed to Moran the beginning of the end in his rivalry with Wade for the love of Helen. To have the fruits of victory snatched from him because of a sentiment of friendship, was almost more than the agent could stand for.

"Good God, Senator, don't throw this chance away! Think what it means to us! We are running close-hauled, and until this moment it's been a toss-up whether we'd get out of here with our lives; whether I would, at least. I've put on a mighty bold front to these cattle people, but I did it because it was the only way. I've bluffed them so far, but when they find out that it's not farm land we're after, but ore—why, Senator, there'll be no holding them! With Wade at their head, and forty miles to Sand Bluffs, where'd we get off? We'd be lucky if we didn't swing from the limb of a tree. Do you suppose Wade would remember then that he'd broken your bread? I'll bet you he wouldn't."

"But——" Moran sank his voice to a significant whisper—"if we get him in jail——"

"His friends here would get him out," interposed the Senator, nervously blowing on his glasses.

"Then Uncle Sam would put him in again, and that would be another feather in our cap. No, sir, once we get him in jail we've got the Government on our side, don't forget that. Then the cattle party would lay mighty low. Wade has been their leader right along. I tell you, it's the only way, and you know what this means to you——"

"You don't have to tell me that," rasped Rexhill. "If I don't put this through, I'm a ruined man."

Moran's eyes gleamed.

"Well, then, it's the only way, unless—unless——"

"Well?"

"Unless your daughter marries him, and it all comes into the family." Upon that point Moran wished to know just where he stood.

"I've never yet made a dollar through my daughter, and I never will," said the Senator grimly. "I'm not selling my own flesh and blood. I'll rot away in the poorhouse first."

Moran gently breathed his relief. He would have fought to the fullest extent of his power to have aborted such a marriage, but if the Senator had favored it it would have been difficult to prevent.

"Wade has a foreman that he's mighty fond of, an old man named Santry——"

"That's a horse of another color." Rexhill appeared aroused. "I remember the old fellow. He's nearly ready for the boneyard, anyway. Put in on him if you like. Wade's devoted to him. He'd do as much for Santry as for himself, maybe more."

"I've heard about that kind of devotion," the agent sneered, "but I've never seen any of it."

"Well, you may this time. Your first proposition's no good anyway. It would simply further antagonize Wade's friends. It's quite possible, though, that Santry might have been mixed up in such a brawl. Get him in jail, and then we'll let Wade know, gradually, that our influence is at his command, for a price. I've no objection to that—none at all. By Heaven, we've got to do something."

"We might try it. I'll see that a warrant is sworn out."

"Meanwhile, Race, go easy with the sheep. Gordon was complaining to me about it, and, as a matter of strategy, I had to pretend that I would help him. Move them off the range until we see what comes of this Santry business. I couldn't go too heavy with the boy at the start."

"All right." Moran arose. "They'd likely have to go anyway."

"I don't mind saying, Race, that you've done very well here. You couldn't ave done better. If you stick to me, you'll not find me ungrateful when this thing is over. You'll get your reward."

Moran hesitated, seeming to summon the courage to speak.

"Maybe you know what reward I'm looking for, Senator," he said slowly. "There are some things that mean more to a man than money. I'm thinking of Miss Helen."

Rexhill found difficulty in placing his gaze so that it would appear to fall elsewhere than on Moran. He was mortified by a sense of shame that he could not deal squarely with this aspirant for the hand of his daughter. He had been sincere in saying that he would never barter her to further his own interests, but so much hung in the balance here, that until the issue really arose, he feared to pass upon it. He felt himself stultified by this truth.

"I haven't spoken to her, Senator, because the time hasn't come, and just now she's too much occupied elsewhere, perhaps. But all my hopes are fixed on her, sir, and when the time does come I trust you'll not oppose them."

Rexhill coughed to hide what his face might otherwise have shown.

"Well, Race," he said, with a sensation as though he would choke. "You know what I think of you. And as for the rest, well, as I've said, that will depend on her."

This interesting story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it.

The Gift of God

By Llewellyn J. Williams

"WELL, Doc?"

"It's bad, Pender. If the baby had lived, she might have pulled through all right."

Pender gripped the fence-post convulsively, as a sob escaped him.

"You must be brave, old man. It's terrible for you, I know. My heart aches——"

"Yes, Doc, I know how you can feel for a fellow. I am very grateful. Don't you think there's any chance at all for her?"

"A chance, yes, but that is all. When she awakens and looks for her baby, the disappointment may prove fatal."

The other cried brokenly: "And when everything was looking so bright! I've got a good cotton crop this year, as good as any in this part of Oklahoma, and could have done so much for her."

The doctor turned away, blinking hard. His hand went impulsively to Pender's shoulder, and rested there for a moment in caress.

"I must be going, Pender. I'd stay longer with you if I could do any good. I'll be around early in the morning."

"All right, Doc. Come early, will you?"

"Yes. I wonder who that can be?"

The sound of a horse tearing madly over the road came to their ears as they stood listening.

"Coming this way, Doc."

"Yes."

"Somebody after you, I guess."

"I wouldn't be surprised," sighed the doctor.

Because of the darkness, they could not see the rider until he was close to them. He rode up to the gate and began to call without dismounting.

"Hello!" replied the doctor.

"That you, Doc?"

"Yes. That you, Trayson?"

"Yes. I want you to come to my house right away!"

"All right! I'm ready," said the doctor.

"Hello, Bill!" called Pender.

"Hello, Tom! That you? I didn't see you. How's Mary?"

"Pretty bad, Doc says. The baby died, Bill," answered Pender huskily.

"My God!" exclaimed Trayson. "Tom, old man, I'm sure sorry to hear that. Annie's been worrying about her."

"I thought she would be. Better not say anything about our trouble until it's all over up at your house."

"No, it wouldn't do to tell her now. Thank you, Tom, for your thoughtfulness. I sure feel for you. I wish I could stay with you, but I'll have to hurry back with Doc. I'll be around early in the morning."

Trayson started off rapidly, with the doctor following. They made the three miles in quick time, for the road was smooth and hard. Trayson kept a good lead, and was waiting to take care of the doctor's horse when the latter arrived. The physician hurried down into the dugout, and brought a smile to the woman on the bed with his cheerful greeting. He was busy for the next hour, and did not stop to rest until the little red-headed fellow had been safely ushered into the world.

"Well, Mrs. Trayson," grinned the doctor, "I think that the eighth is the finest of all."

"No, no, Doctor," smiled the woman, "they are all fine! Not one is more precious than the others. It is hard for poor people to provide for so many when crops are bad, but I have always believed that each of my children was a special blessing sent from Heaven."

The mother drew the tiny body close to her own, and kissed the little face passionately.

"He's all right, is he, Doctor?"

"Sound as a dollar!"

Just then the baby sneezed and broke out into a loud cry, as if to verify the doctor's opinion.

"He has good lungs, anyway," laughed the mother.

"Yes, indeed!" agreed the doctor. "He's as healthy a youngster as I've seen for some time."

"Oh, I'm so glad, and so thankful," she replied.

"Have you picked a name for him yet?"

"Yes. He is John. You know, Doctor, that means a gift—a gracious gift of God."

The doctor nodded. He was beginning to learn more of this weary-eyed woman. He had thought that her life was made up of nothing but the drab common things of every day's dull routine.

"Beautiful idea, Mrs. Trayson," he said inanely.

He went out of the humble dirt-floored home as if he were leaving a sanctuary. He had been inspired.

"Your wife is an exceptional woman, Trayson," he said, as he was climbing into his buggy.

"I know it," her husband agreed. "Would it be all right to tell her about Mary, now?"

"Why so soon?"

"I'm afraid she'll feel hard toward me, if I keep it from her. She's looked after Mary and brought her up ever since their mother died."

"No, it won't hurt her. You can go in and break it to her gently."

"All right, Doc, and thank you."

"Sad all around," muttered the doctor as he drove away slowly. "Poor little Mary Pender. She will probably have a terrible shock when she asks for her baby and learns that it is dead. She has been keyed up to the highest joy because of this first baby. What a pleasure it would have been for them! Pender is in good shape financially, and well able to care for the child. Poor Annie Trayson—eight children now, and the burden already more than they can carry.

"Strange it could not have been turned about. Of course, Annie would have grieved sorely if her baby had not lived, but she would have had seven left to comfort her. Poor little Mary! I'm afraid of the shock when she learns the truth."

Arriving home, long after midnight, the doctor unhitched his horse and walked wearily to the house. Remembering his promise to call early at Pender's, five miles away, he removed his shoes and lay down on the bed without undressing. He awoke with a start, after sleeping soundly, to find that it was after seven o'clock. He jumped out of bed, ate a hurried breakfast, and was soon on his way.

"I'm afraid to go there," he muttered.

As he drove up to the door, he noticed that everything was very still. He was sure that his prediction had proven true. He went down the dugout steps, sad at heart, and knocked on the rough wooden door. He straightened up quickly as he heard Mary's voice.

"Come right in," she said.

He went in and stood beside the bed, staring in surprise. She smiled happily up at him, as she pulled down the cover from the little red head which nestled close to her breast.

"Well, Doctor, what is the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing, nothing!" he exclaimed hastily. "I am surprised and overjoyed to find you so well. I was afraid last night."

"I felt so much better after I awoke," she replied. "And when Tom brought me the baby—my dear little baby—to hold, I was so happy."

"Yes, of course," nodded the doctor stupidly.

"Isn't he a little beauty, Doctor?"

"Yes, he is. Where's Tom?"

"He's gone over to the next house. He'll be back soon. Won't you sit down?"

"No, I won't wait. I came to see how you were getting on. I will go on, for you do not need me."

He mumbled as he walked out of the house and climbed into his buggy: "Can such a thing be possible? Could anything like that happen in this sordid, selfish world? I never knew anything like it before. It is wonderful and terrible, soul-gripping, astounding—I am very humble in the presence of the greatness of it.

"Get up, Nellie," he ordered the horse as he touched her lightly with the whip, "get up! We're going to Trayson's in a hurry."

Trayson was at the corral when the doctor arrived.

"Go on in, Doc," he called. "I'll be there in a few minutes."

The doctor nodded and went down into the dwelling. The first object which met his eye was a little table near the wall, on which lay an object covered with a clean towel. He did not ask what it was—he knew. He turned to the bed, and his eyes rested on the drawn face of the woman. He could say nothing. Reverence and awe were in his gaze. He saw an eternity of agony that looked out from the depths of her soul.

"I had to do it, Doctor," she sobbed. "I had to save her, my poor little sister! Oh, my baby, my baby!"

He turned away and sat down with his face in his hands.

"My God! What a sacrifice!" he murmured. "I'll never experience anything like this again this side of Heaven. It has all the darkness and glory of Calvary."

He arose in a few moments and went to the bedside. He grasped her hand, and felt that he was in the presence of things other than of this world.

"God's gift," he breathed, "that's what it was—from a woman of God!"

* * *

A Sad, Sad, Tale.

The evening sky was glowing with the last rays of the setting sun. Two middle-aged men sat on a large flat rock at the edge of a pond on the outskirts of the city.

That afternoon they had sallied forth in an attempt to lure the finny denizens of the pond from their native haunt, but nary a hornpout graced the bottom of a formidable-looking basket. On another rock, a few hundred yards away, three or four urchins were rapidly filling an old pail with various and sundry specimens of fish.

Mournful preparations were under way for their retirement. As the older one hauled in his line there was a sudden tug. The pole was given a mighty jerk, but no nine-pound pickerel struggled through the air. Disclosure revealed a bent and broken twig. Thoroughly disgusted, they started to leave.

As they wandered down the path they came upon the boys and eyed their pail with envious eyes. After a consultation they decided to purchase the products of the boys' industry, parting with four bits of United States silver.

Putting the fish in a large bag they sallied forth to civilization. The fish, however, were destined never to be eaten by hungry mortals. They reached the corner grocery and after exhibiting the fine fish "which we caught," laid the bag down on the sugar barrel while they negotiated the purchase of the family provender for the morrow.

The storekeeper keeps two large cats and the pussies promptly located the whereabouts of the fish. While the owners dallied and talked the fish disappeared in one, two, three order.

As the cats made their escape, when discovered, they were obliged to dodge several cans of squash, thrown from the store shelves, and now the grocer is mourning the loss of the trade of two cash customers.

* * *

Fatal Oversight.

When the telephone bell rang Vandalia Trippitts was looking in the mirror, and out of it, as it were.

"Thirty-nine years old today!" she mused.

And then the bell rang.

II.

"What? What say?" she called into the mouthpiece. "Oh! Yes, yes, certainly I'll marry you!"

III.

Two minutes later she was in her boudoir again, sobbing as if her heart would break.

Was the rapture too much for her?

Was it a case of too much sudden joy? Nay!

Two nays!

"Woe is me! Alas and alack, and again, alas!" wept Vandalia. "I neglected to ask who he was!"

* * *

The Prize Hog.

Ebenezer Holcombe had a 1,200-pound hog, which he had exhibited in a tent at the fairs for three years, charging ten cents admission.

One day a traveling man who was passing through the town in which Mr. Holcombe lived called at the house and asked if he might see the hog of which he had heard so much. Ebenezer proudly led the way to the hoghouse, but at the door he turned.

"Cost you ten cents," he drawled.

The visitor took a dime from his pocket, passed it to the farmer and turned back.

"Why, you ain't seen the prize hog!" called Ebenezer.

"Yes, I have," retorted the traveling man. "I've seen him," and continued his way back to the country store.

Aaron Lapwing's Genius

Or, For the Princess Herodias

By Leonard Britten

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CHAPTER XI.

A NEW ALLIANCE.

NEXT moment the inner court beneath Roddy was packed with a horde of flying citizens and retreating soldiers, struggling and swarming hither and thither, seeking some refuge. There could be no doubt as to what had happened. The Malissori had made an attack upon Durazzo by night, and were on the point of capturing the palace.

Lights appeared at all the windows. Roddy heard the terrified cries of women, the shouts of company commanders, rallying their men. The guards came streaming out of the entrances that led from the court into the palace building. The crackling of rifle fire sounded as continuously as that of maxims.

Roddy sprang through the window to the paved courtway, six feet beneath him, and collided violently with a man in a suit of pajamas and one bath slipper. He recognized the Italian minister. He was limping because the stone flags were cold, and he was hunting on the ground in the darkness, presumably to find what he had lost.

Roddy's heart turned as instinctively toward Lady Alice at this juncture as a wanderer's toward his home. He ran frantically to and fro in the courtyard among the fugitives. The court was emptying again, for the citizens had fled from what had appeared a cul-de-sac, and the guard, having been marshaled into some semblance of order, had gone out into the street also to offer resistance to the surprise attack on the part of the tribesmen.

And Roddy found Lady Alice. She was standing at the entrance to one of the interior corridors. She was fully dressed and appeared perfectly self-possessed. In either hand she carried a little nickel-plated revolver. She smiled at Roddy and handed one to him.

"You will need to protect yourself," she said.

"To protect you," he answered, taking it, as also a handful of cartridges. "I am never going to leave you again."

"Then you will have a lot of traveling to do, Mr. Nicholson," she answered, smiling at him again.

"Do you think you can make your way with me to the American consulate?" asked Roddy.

Lady Alice laid a cool hand on Roddy's shaking one. Her own was not shaking in the least.

"Mr. Nicholson," she said, "if you had traveled as much as I have you would know the old traveler's maxim: 'When in danger, stay where you are.' We are perfectly safe with Prince Herod."

"You are not going to stick by that old scoundrel still, are you?" demanded Roddy. "Look here!"

A flying bullet had chipped a piece of plaster from the opposite wall, high overhead. However, so long as they remained inside the courtyard they were sheltered against rifle fire from without. But what was happening outside could not be told, though from the yelling it seemed as though the besiegers and the besieged had met in a hand-to-hand conflict.

"Mr. Nicholson," said Lady Alice, "I suppose I ought to have warned you, but I had no opportunity to talk to you. And then, I had my duty to Prince Herod. This attack was planned yesterday. His highness has adherents within the palace, and everything has been arranged for his restoration to his friends. We shall——"

She got no further, for in that instant a band of armed Malissori rushed into the palace court, shouting and brandishing their matchlocks. Roddy swung Lady Alice into his arms and carried her back into the corridor. As he ran he heard the shouts of his pursuers behind him. He plunged on into complete darkness.

Suddenly a fresh body of men swarmed down the passage. Trapped between the two hostile parties, Roddy set Lady Alice down and, with his pistol drawn, prepared to defend her. An instant later the two parties of men had met in the corridor.

In a twinkling Roddy was swept from his feet. He stretched out his arms toward Lady Alice, but could not find her. The impetus of the attackers and the defenders was irresistible, and the yells were like an unchaining of pandemonium.

It was impossible to use any weapons but fists and feet, but of these the two bodies of men made the best possible use. Roddy was underneath, bruised and buffeted, and drawn hither and thither, as a bank of shingle that is swept to and fro by the tide. How long the struggle lasted it was impossible to determine. But at last, with a rush, the defenders swept over Roddy and chased the attacking Malissori into the courtyard, where the crackling of rifles and pistols began once more.

The din was so terrific that Roddy could not hear himself shout. He lay upon his face, half-stunned, and mauled worse than he had ever been even in the most terrific football scrimmage. He called for Lady Alice again and again, but there came no answer. He could hardly raise himself from the ground. He had small hope of finding Lady Alice now, and none whatever of coming upon the Metropolitan Archbishop. It seemed impossible that a woman could have withstood such buffetings as he had received. Even his hardened muscles had been almost wrenched from their supports. Roddy groped for Lady Alice's body, but there was nothing.

He found a match in his pocket and struck it on the stone floor. The narrow corridor was completely deserted. There was no sign of the struggle, except a sword-belt that somebody had let fall. Clearly Lady Alice had been snatched from his side.

Possibly she had planned to rejoin Prince Herod; perhaps she had counted on this attack and had been carried away by the Malissori, at her own desire. This thought gave Roddy some comfort.

The din was dying away. Roddy raised his voice and shouted again.

Raising himself upon his feet with a desperate effort, he pushed his way along the passage. At the far end he saw a glimmer of light come from beneath a door. He pushed the door open, and, as he did so, the sound of voices in violent altercation came to him.

He found himself again in the council-room. It was filled with soldiers and civilians, and, in the midst of them, he saw the representatives of the Powers. Count Bernstorff was listening to the excited explanations of a military officer, who, as he talked, cut figures of eight in the air with an immensely long sword.

The Italian minister was still in his pajamas, but he had found another slipper. It was no mate for the bath slipper, being, in fact, a shoe from the foot of one of the Albanian guards, but still, it kept the cold out.

As Roddy entered a man leaped out from among the throng and grasped him by both arms. Roddy, still half-dazed, stared at him, trying to remember who he was.

He was looking into the livid, anger-twisted face of Lord Sutcliffe. And then his senses came back to him.

"Where is she?" he cried wildly. "They have stolen her."

Lord Sutcliffe looked at him in furious amazement.

"You ought to know," he shouted. "You were seen entering the window opposite the apartment of Prince Witmar."

"I don't know what you mean," cried Roddy in desperation, "but she was seized from me during the attack. Let us go after her. They will hold her as a hostage, perhaps murder her. We must rescue her."

"You were privy to it," shouted Sutcliffe. "They used you as a tool, because she wanted to marry you."

"Lady Alice——" began Roddy with dignity.

"I am not speaking of Lady Alice," Lord Sutcliffe shouted. "I am speaking of the Princess Herodias. Where is she?"

The Austrian ambassador, who had stood near, listening to the conversation, laid a restraining hand on Sutcliffe's arm.

"This is no time for explanations or recriminations," he said. "The fact remains that Prince Witmar has attempted a coup d'etat, and it is necessary to checkmate him by recovering her highness, Princess Herodias, immediately. The rest will settle itself."

"I will ride after her," Sutcliffe shouted, like a man demented.

"Collect a company of mounted troops," said Count Bernstorff. "There is no time to be lost. Undoubtedly she is with Prince Hassan and well without the limits of the town. I will assume charge of the palace in view of Prince Witmar's defection. I will instruct Ibrahim Pasha to round up a company——"

"I will attend to that, your excellency," answered Lord Sutcliffe. "I notify you that I have resigned my office as Prince Hassan's representative. I have no further part in these matters. And you can all go to the devil!" he added savagely, under his breath, as he strode from the room.

Roddy followed him along the corridor into the interior courtyard. He saw Sutcliffe hurry beneath an archway, and with limbs that seemed miraculously restored to suppleness, he hastened after him.

He did not understand the situation at all, save that Prince Herod had escaped from custody, thanks to Prince Witmar's intrigues, and that he was undoubtedly on his way toward his principality. And, with him, was undoubtedly Lady Alice. Also, of course, Herodias. For the man who kidnaped her must have been privy to the conspiracy. If that was so, the situation was beginning to grow clearer.

Roddy found Lord Sutcliffe in the stables of the palace, behind a row of archways opposite the court entrance. Two horses were fastened at the end of the line of stalls, and one of these was already bridled. As Roddy entered, Lord Sutcliffe swung round upon him.

"I am going with you," said Roddy.

Lord Sutcliffe came toward him. It was evident that he was keeping himself under control only by an intense effort of will.

"Do you know where I am going?" he cried. "I am going to find the Princess Herodias, and I am going to save her from her fate. Will you swear to me that you had no part in the conspiracy?"

"I certainly had no part in the kidnaping of the Princess," Roddy answered, which was all that he could say. "But if she has followed her father——"

"Good Lord, man!" shouted Sutcliffe impatiently, "don't you understand anything that has been going on beneath your eyes? It isn't her father that has stolen her—it is that arch-scoundrel Hassan, Prince of the Mohammedan Malissori. He means to make her his wife and defy the Powers, uniting the two branches of the clan by those means. He tricked me, as he tricked Count Bernstorff.

"Witmar and Herod were in league with each other, and I was as blind as a bat. I thought I was playing a statesman's part, and I was only playing a fool's part. I was at Oxford with Hassan, and I thought he was as frank as an Englishman. Now I have done with him, and the ministers too. From this moment I am only a privte gentleman, riding forth to find the woman I love."

"Lady Alice——" began Roddy.

"No! The Princess Herodias!" Lord Sutcliffe shouted. "I love her better than all the world."

"But you said she was a little devil," Roddy objected.

"And so she is!" shouted Sutcliffe exultantly. "A beautiful, sweet, angelic devil. She is all fire and spirit. She is as noble as any woman Heaven has ever made. Nicholson, I have been fighting down my passion for her for months, partly because of my engagement to Lady Alice, and partly because of my duty to Prince Hassan. But Lady Alice has told me that she loves me no longer, and Prince Hassan's treachery has thrown everything into the melting-pot. I am playing my own hand now."

"And so am I!" cried Roddy. "I love Lady Alice, and, by Heaven, I mean to win her!"

"Then our paths lie together," cried Lord Sutcliffe, "because the destinies of those two women do not lie far apart. Come with me through the Gates of the Klephts, the pass that lies between us and the unknown hinterland of Albania. Let us go together, and seek our destinies."

And Roddy, looking at him, realized that the man was as medieval as the Princess herself. They were well matched, the beautiful Princess and this twentieth-century gentleman with the adventurer's heart.

Roddy bridled and saddled his mount and pulled the girth tight. His heart was throbbing in his breast with joy. Everything was clear at last, and he had an adventure before him that was worth the striving.

Everything, that was to say, except the part played by Aaron Lapwing. And by now he had begun to consider Lapwing as an irrelevant factor in the situation.

Whatever happened, Lapwing could never pass the Gates of the Klephts. He might rot, with his concession in his pocket, upon the wharf at Durazzo, be-

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fore he would ever trouble Roddy again.

When they were mounted Lord Sutcliffe drew his horse up to Roddy's.

"This undertaking holds all our future," he said. "I'm trusting you, Nicholson, and I am putting my entire faith in you, because I believe you are an honorable man and a brave one. We shall find those whom we love, or die in the attempt. I'm not going to take any soldiers with us. We cannot trust those thieves. They would sell us out for a bauble. And I am not going to play the part of a tool for Count Bernstorff. This is a land in which strength and self-reliance win, and only those two qualities. Have you any weapon, Nicholson?"

He laughed when Roddy showed him Lady Alice's revolver, and, reaching into his saddle-bags, pulled out two automatic pistols of .45 caliber.

"These have the stopping quality, not that toy of yours, Nicholson," he said. "And here!"

He handed him a fistful of pistol cartridges and one of the weapons. Roddy thrust the long-muzzled, blue-black thing into his belt. Lady Alice's revolver he unloaded and put in his coat pocket.

"We are going to make for the Gates of the Klephts," said Sutcliffe. "Wherever their road lies, it must pass through there. Are you ready?"

He kicked his horse, and the two animals leaped together for the narrow street.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GATES OF THE KLEPHTS.

THE street fighting had not been of a very sanguinary nature, for only an occasional body lay limp in the roadway. It had entirely ceased, and it was evident, that, whether or not Prince Witmar's coup had been successful, the attack of the Malissori tribesmen had been repulsed at the palace doors.

Roddy and Sutcliffe spurred their horses into a gallop, and they dashed along the narrow ways, beneath the shuttered windows, until the town lay beneath them and they had begun to ascend the precipitous slopes behind it.

Sporadic outbursts of firing could still be heard, but these seemed to be concentrated on the north and south sides of Durazzo, and the winding, climbing road lay eastward.

At last the panting, sweat-covered horses, that had ascended the rocky way as agilely as goats, reached the summit and continued at a walk, their flanks heaving and their bits covered with foam. A full moon was halfway up in the sky, illuminating the slopes of the distant mountains and Durazzo, a cluster of white houses in the hollows, far beneath. The heavens were ablaze with stars. No pickets had been encountered, and it seemed probable that in the confusion of the fighting these had been withdrawn or had disappeared, leaving the approaches clear.

As he rode Roddy began to realize more clearly the desperate nature of the undertaking. Prince Herod had certainly not escaped without a bodyguard. It was a case of two men, armed with pistols, against perhaps a hundred. Moreover, whether from Herod or from Hassan, their reception was certain to be a dubious one.

The horses were now picking their way along a stony ravine, which ran between two lines of lofty hills. Bowlders were scattered everywhere, and there was hardly a sign of vegetation. The animals slipped and scrambled among the sliding flints. The path ran uphill continually.

They must have been traveling for nearly three hours when they reached the crest of the tableland behind Durazzo. For the first time they drew rein and let their jaded horses rest. Looking back, Roddy could see the flat, black line of the Adriatic beneath him. Durazzo was hidden among the valleys. Everywhere around them were towering peaks.

For miles in front and upon every side, reaching to the bases of those giant mountains, was the flat, stony plateau. It was the acme of desolation.

For the first time since their departure Lord Sutcliffe spoke.

"They must have come by this way," he said. "I hoped that we might intercept either party before it reached this crest. They must have been traveling fast; perhaps they had relays of horses."

There was no sign of life or movement anywhere upon the vast expanse. It was a wilderness of stones.

"Yonder lie the Gates of the Klephts," continued Sutcliffe, extending his arm before him. "I have never passed them. Even Prince Hassan could not overcome the perpetual rule which forbids a stranger from traversing that pass. All my relations with him have had to be conducted at his city house in Durazzo. But we will pass them before dawn, Nicholson.

"As far as the Gates," he continued, "Prince Hassan and Prince Herod must travel by the same road. From that point their paths diverge. Hassan's territory lies to the north; Herod's to the south. Let us dismount and give our horses fifteen mintes' rest, Nicholson. We shall travel the faster afterward and make up our lost time."

They got out of their saddles and seated themselves among the stones, the reins around their left arms. The horses, as though aware that there was no blade of grass anywhere in that wilderness, stood stock-still, waiting patiently.

The moon had dipped into a bank of clouds, and suddenly a furious storm of rain beat on them. The darkness was impenetrable; they sat side by side and could not see each other. In a moment Roddy was drenched to the skin.

It was impossible to think of continuing the journey in that storm. The horses stood, with lowered heads, immovable, while the wind howled and drove the rain in stinging spray against them. An hour must have passed before the storm ceased as suddenly as it had arisen. Then the moon reappeared. The mountains came into sight once more.

Perched on their soaked saddles and exuding water, Roddy and Sutcliffe continued upon their route. Sutcliffe seemed to have completely changed since their departure, and Roddy, conscious of the new mood that possessed him, watched him with deepening interest.

Sutcliffe was singing as he rode, and a nervous power seemed to proceed from him. He seemed like some exultant and gay cavalier of bygone ages, not the moody, slightly arrogant, and very taciturn Englishman whom Roddy had known.

And Roddy remembered what Prince Hassan had told him of the Austrian castle in the wild region forty miles across the Albanian border, which Sutcliffe had never seen. He was half Klepht himself, this Englishman of noble birth, and the wild nature of his savage forbears had come to the surface as the dominant quality and had totally displaced the veneer of respectable, stolid traditions on which he had been nurtured.

Hour after hour they rode, until at last the stones yielded to a sandy gravel, and then to turf. The mountains drew together, encircled them, and opened up, revealing more mountains, still more precipitous, in the distance. It began to lighten.

A gray fog crept up about them, lying so low that the crests of mountains were visible above its enfolding wreaths. Saffron streaked the peaks, changing to crimson. The fog rolled up, and suddenly the yellow rim of the sun appeared at the end of a cleft among the hills.

They were at the entrance to a narrow valley, entirely surrounded by mountains, opening into a wooded expanse at the far end. And infinitely far away, standing out like a lighthouse at the base of a mountain ridge, a solitary castle was visible.

They dismounted again and let the horses graze on the fertile plain, knee-haltering them to prevent them from straying far. Then Sutcliffe spoke, and again Roddy reflected that it was his first speech since they had mounted.

"I don't believe," he said, "that either Prince Hassan and the Princess, or Prince Herod and his party are ahead of us.

"You see," he continued, "this valley is the Gates of the Klephts, through which all must pass who wish to enter Albania proper. This is the boundary of twentieth-century civilization, and, once beyond this defile, we skip back five centuries. The pass has been garrisoned from time immemorial by equal numbers of Christian and Mohammedan Malissori. The agreement is five centuries old.

"Though Prince Herod's and Prince Hassan's men are engaged in perpetual warfare, a solemn truce unites the garrisons here at the pass against the outside world. It is probable that the pass is guarded, and that we are riding into an ambuscade. On the other hand, the guards may have abandoned their posts to join the rival forces at Durazzo.

"I don't believe that either party has passed us, Nicholson, because we have ridden hard, and had they been in advance of us, we should have seen them."

"You think we passed them?" inquired Roddy.

"Yes, while we were journeying over that stony waste. Though it seems level, it is full of hollows in which an army corps could ride concealed. If so, we had better wait here among the rocks, and we shall see them approaching well before they catch sight of us."

The sun, which was now above the horizon, illuminated the country for miles around. Lying among the bowlders on the side of a mountain, the two men scanned the plain behind them. And presently two tiny dots, which Roddy had thought trees, seemed to have changed places.

Undoubtedly, for presently they resolved themselves into two tiny figures on horseback, about the size, apparently, of toy soldiers. Then, strung out into a line behind them, perhaps a mile in their rear, came other figures, also mounted.

"Hassan and the Princess!" exclaimed Roddy.

"And Prince Herod and his Malissori in pursuit of them," Lord Sutcliffe answered.

The two figures grew larger. Hassan was making for the entrance to the pass, but what would happen if the pass was garrisoned, and with which party the neutral garrison would side, was a perplexing problem.

The figures drew nearer, and suddenly Lord Sutcliffe sprang to his feet. Roddy saw his eyes dilate with anger. He looked at the approaching riders. They were a man and a woman, but not Prince Hassan and Herodias. On the contrary, none but an Englishwoman would ride with that stirrupy seat—and side-saddle. Besides, the Princess Herodias would certainly not have ridden along so quietly at the side of her abductor. It was Herod and Lady Alice, and they were seeking refuge in the castle among the distant mountains.

Roddy and Sutcliffe mounted hastily. The fugitives were now within a quarter of a mile of them. And with the pad, pad of flying hoofs they came galloping up the pass.

Lord Sutcliffe turned to Roddy. "We are all four in the same boat," he said. And the two men rode down to join the man and the woman.

Neither of the fugitives drew rein as the four met. Their horses were dripping sweat and exhausted in the last degree. Roddy urged his horse to Lady Alice's side. She pointed forward, breathlessly. Roddy understood. The Malissori of Herod's tribe were in command of the pass; once there, they would be safe, and could halt and take counsel together.

The winding pass hid Hassan's men; it widened again, disclosing them. But it disclosed also figures that sprang up from the hillsides and swarmed down toward the four. They surrounded them with wild yells and firing of matchlocks; and then, recognizing their tribal leader, they raised a shout that rang through the hills like thunder.

At the sight of this reception the pursuers drew rein in the heart of the pass and seemed to consult together. They realized that the fortune of that day had turned. They drew together in a cluster.

Then it could be perceived that in the center of the group rode Prince Hassan, and at his side was a veiled figure in white. Without a word Sutcliffe had dashed out from among the Malissori, and was galloping straight into the heart of the hostile force.

And, as he set spurs to his horse, the Princess Herodias was seen to urge her horse forward also, and so swift and sudden was the action that she was fifty yards ahead of Prince Hassan's men before they realized that she had gone to met Sutcliffe. It was impossible to fire for fear of hitting her.

Hassan dashed out in pursuit of her, and the three figures on horseback met together in the middle of the pass. Roddy saw Sutcliffe's arm go up and the fist descend with stunning force on Hassan's head. Next moment he had seized the Princess' horse by the bridle.

Hassan was reeling in his saddle. His followers came thundering toward him, but Sutcliffe had a clear start for his own end of the pass. However, at that moment the Princess' horse balked. The next it could be seen that she had turned its head back toward the ranks of her capturers. Evidently the volatile princess had changed her mind at the last moment.

Then Roddy saw Sutcliffe swing her bodily out of her saddle into his; and thus, carrying her in his arms, he made his way back to Prince Herod and dismounted with his burden in the midst of the amazed Malissori. But his face was a mass of scratches, and he rubbed his shins as he set the Princess down. And under the white robes Roddy could see a pair of red walking shoes with very solid Parisian heels. He had just time to see this when Herodias flung herself into his arms.

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again!" she cried. "And now we shall be married, as we meant to be last night, and we shall never be parted again."

Roddy looked up, to see Lady Alice's clear gray eyes fixed upon his with an expression of unutterable scorn.

"Her highness is quite right, Mr. Nicholson," she said. "It is not the custom to play fast and loose with women in this country, whatever the fashion may be in your own. Personally, I think that the sooner you two are married the better."

Roddy only sighed wearily. He was incapable of words. For here they all were again, just as they had been aboard the yacht, and in Durazzo, too, and the situation had not advanced an appreciable fraction of a degree. His only hope was that the same luck which had postponed his nuptials would continue with him. He saw Sutcliffe glaring at him, and realized that the struggle before him would be a hard one, whichever way it terminated.

CHAPTER XIII.

HEROD RIDES HOME.

"BUT, Lady Alice, you must admit that I am not to blame," Roddy expostulated.

It was on the following morning. The party had camped for the night in a wooded ravine, and now Prince Herod's castle was plainly visible, standing out at the base of the mighty mountain some fifteen miles away.

Roddy had ridden like a Napoleon in exile, for Sutcliffe had curtly declined his advances, and for a long time he had been unable to induce Lady Alice to speak to him. Finally he had succeeded in getting her permission to ride beside her and explain his actions.

"Do you mean to tell me that you have not encouraged her highness at all?" demanded Lady Alice. "Have you never given her reason to suppose that you were in love with her?"

"Never," said Roddy fervently. "I love you, and——"

Lady Alice stopped him with a decisive gesture.

"It is useless to speak of that, Mr. Nicholson," she said. "There are too many impediments in the way."

"What?" Roddy demanded.

"Your pledge to the Princess."

"But surely you will believe me, Lady Alice," Roddy protested, "when I tell you that I have never sought to win her love?"

Lady Alice looked away and sighed.

"Reserving that point," she said, "there is another—my duty to the poor Albanian women."

"But there is no reason——" Roddy began.

"And the fact that I am engaged to Lord Sutcliffe," Lady Alice ended, with an air of great finality.

That silenced Roddy. It was not for him to tell her that Sutcliffe was as willing to break their engagement as he knew Lady Alice to be.

"Lady Alice," said Roddy humbly, "if ever I get out of this horrible situation, may I speak to you then?"

She looked at him wistfully, questioningly. And Roddy knew that her heart was his, and always would be; but he knew, too, that for the present even that question must remain unanswered.

Evidently Prince Herod feared no enemies in his own territory, for the guard of Malissori had proceeded only a few miles with the party, and the five had ridden unescorted since the preceding afternoon. So far, except for a few lonely huts perched high on inaccessible peaks, no signs of habitation had been seen. The fertile country was as lonely as a desert.

But as the party emerged through the last defile, and entered the wide grassy plain that extended from the mountain cleft toward the castle, perched at the base of its crag, a man came riding out to meet them. At first this figure was simply that of a man on horseback; then, as it drew nearer, it resolved itself into something extravagantly absurd.

The beast which Roddy had taken for a horse was an old mule, wall-eyed and knock-kneed. And on its back was perched a dwarfed, misshapen figure in a high tasseled cap and a parti-colored suit of tights, of blue and yellow. In its hand it carried a Punch's head.

The figure reined in its shabby steed at a distance of about fifty yards, and then, to Roddy's amazement, proceeded to turn a somersault over the mule's head. Lighting upon its feet, it proceeded in a succession of somersaults toward Prince Herod. As it approached it had the appearance of a human wheel, and it moved so quickly that the illusion of a wheel or hoop was perfectly sustained.

The last bound carried it to the Prince's side, whereupon, leaping upon the neck of the startled horse, and controlling it by grasping the bridle with one hand, it perched itself before Prince Herod and grinned and chattered at him.

Roddy felt Lady Alice's fingers on his arm. He glanced up at her. Her face expressed fear, and for the first time since he had known her.

"It's a madman!" she exclaimed.

"No, it's—it's a fool," Roddy exclaimed. "The fool of the medieval court. Has that custom survived here through all these centuries?"

"I don't know," answered the girl in agitation. "I never passed the Gates of the Klephts before."

Roddy could see that she was laboring under considerable agitation. And he realized that this girl who could face battle so calmly was no creature of iron nerves, but a woman who had schooled herself by virtue of her sympathy for other human beings, and was as vulnerable as any woman in the presence of unexpected things.

But the situation was sufficiently startling to have upset the poise of a strong man, and rendered not the less so when the fool, donning a paper crown, somersaulted back to his mule and rode prancingly in front of the party, proclaiming something loudly in words which might have been Albanian, but sounded more like gibberish to Roddy.

And he felt certain that he had seen the fool's face somewhere before. But before Roddy could fix the elusive memory the winding track that they were following brought them immediately in front of the castle, and Roddy's amazement effectually drove away all the fugitive recollections that coursed through his mind. He felt inclined to rub his eyes, for he could hardly believe that he was not looking at some fantastic structure erected for purposes of amusement—one of those painted castles that one sees at exhibitions or parks for public amusement.

Before his eyes was upreared an immense castle that might have been constructed during the Middle Ages. A clean-cut moat, filled to the brim with water, encircled it. The massive walls were certainly not paper ones, but granite, hewn from the everlasting Albanian hills. The machicolated wall that surrounded it might have been built that day, for it was clean and true; and by skilled workmen, for every stone was fitted perfectly, and it seemed able to defy anything except heavy artillery. Inside the structure an army might have lain in concealment. The massive keep in the center, the narrow slits of windows, the odd-looking implements of warfare upon the walls, all showed that the castle was a real one, and built for real purposes. From the tower of the central keep streamed a long pennant of yellow and blue, which were seemingly the colors of the flag of Prince Herod's principality.

Instinctively Roddy and Lady Alice had guided their horses together, each groping for the other's comradeship. But Roddy saw another change in Sutcliffe's bearing. The man suited this strange environment as the glove suits the hand. Sutcliffe had unconsciously assumed an air of power; he appeared, more even than the old Prince, like some robber baron returning home from a successful foray. And his nostrils were dilated, and his eyes flashed as he took in the scene before him.

The party was within some four hundred yards of the moat, which sparkled in the bright morning sunshine. Roddy could see that they were approaching the entrance gate, a massive structure of wrought iron which must have been hammered out by some titanic blacksmith upon some herculean anvil. It was protected by a screen of huge beams, tipped with iron, suspended from the castle walls by enormously thick and heavy chains. This screen rendered it as invulnerable to attack as the walls themselves.

Roddy was wondering how they were going to cross the moat when a more amazing spectacle than any which they had seen drove that thought from his head also. For in a twinkling, as if at some silent command, the walls were crowded with figures.

And this time Roddy reined in his horse for a moment and rubbed his eyes in reality. Upon the walls stood groups of ladies, attired in silk and brocade, with huge neck ruffs. Their shoes were pointed and twisted, and the toes fastened to loops at the knees of their gowns by golden chains. Upon their heads they wore the structure known as the hennin—twin horns rising two feet above the masses of piled-up hair, from which depended flowing draperies of silk and cambric.

But still more amazing was the presence of a multitude of men in armor, thronging the walls—real armor, apparently, shimmering in the sunlight. They, too, were looking at the approaching cavalcade, their visors lowered, their hands shielding their eyes.

As Roddy watched a trumpet blew, and the portcullis of iron-tipped beams rose ponderously, creaking, into the air. At the same time the gate descended, revealing at its end a bridge of stout planks, bound with iron, which came down from the top of the wall, extended across the moat, and bridged it. Over this came galloping two boy trumpeters, blowing loud blasts of welcome. And from the walls a wild, enthusiastic cheering rose.

Then there came fluttering down a shower of roses, heaping the bridge and covering the waters of the moat with white and scarlet petals. The pennant dipped, the bugles blew, the cheers from the walls re-echoed from the surrounding hills. And thus the party rode beneath the portcullis and entered the precincts of the castle.

Roddy rode in a daze at Lady Alice's side. He saw her eyes, big with wonder, fixed upon the scene; the veiled Princess, riding at her father's side; and Sutcliffe, seated upright upon his horse. Then he saw somebody else, and, with that vision, a sense of inevitable fate overcame him.

Inside the gate, attired in doublet and high-length hose, surrounded by a group of pages, and chatting amiably with the fool, stood Aaron Lapwing.

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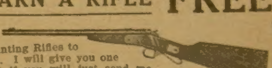

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America's Secret War

Or, INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE

By Marquis James

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Begun in No. 13, March 27. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DARKEST HOUR.

ELABORATE were the plans for the feast and wedding which was to commemorate the reincarnation of the White Queen and her return in the flesh to rule over the people of Taohoto. And the natives, completely duped by the supposed eruption of Mount Pepito, entered into it with feverish zeal in an effort to wipe out their former sins of disobedience.

All business in the village was suspended, and every mother's son of the villagers bent his efforts toward the preparation for the event, which was to be one of the most magnificent spectacles held on the island in years.

When these preparations were begun, Marjorie languished in one of the dungeon cells of the palace. Joe was in a nearby cell, but Marjorie did not know this. And not far away lay Walter Sanders—the man who had prepared the plans for Colonel Sigbee only to have them stolen by the Jap, Sato, before the Colonel could utilize them.

The subterranean chambers in which these three prisoners were confined, were dark, damp, foul-smelling holes which speedily wrecked the strongest constitutions. The jailers themselves never lived over a year. No prisoner had survived three months in these black hell-holes. The only living thing that could exist there was a peculiar species of underground snake.

These reptiles, blind from living in perpetual darkness, crawled in and out of the holes they had burrowed between the stones in the walls and floors. At night a prisoner would drop asleep only to be awakened by the hideous sensation of one of these reptiles crawling over his body.

Fortunately, their bite was not poisonous. But Marjorie deemed this a misfortune, as she vainly tempted one of the serpents to sink its fangs into her breast, hoping the bite would be fatal. But, unlike Cleopatra, she was defeated in this attempt to end her own life.

But Marjorie did not yet know it was the plan to make her a slave, virtually in the same manner the Romans sought to humiliate Cleopatra. So she was filled with amazement when one day the keeper led her from her underground prison to a light, well furnished room. She was given garments of finest silk to wear, and this change in apparel was sorely needed. Excellent dishes were substituted for prison food. Wine was brought to her, but Marjorie did not taste it. Marjorie asked the reason for the change.

"It is the order of his majesty, the King," was the noncommittal reply of the guard.

Neither was Marjorie able to learn anything of the fate of Joe. She had not seen him after they had been separated on the first day of their incarceration. One day the guard came to the Colonel's daughter and said:

"His majesty has requested me to bring you before him."

Untold fears took possession of the girl as she followed the guard through the maze of splendid rooms and finally into the presence of Tubora Tumaida.

She bowed low before the monarch, thinking it best not to offend him, since she was in his power. This pleased the drunken ruler.

"Ah," he said in almost perfect English, "Forgive me for the days you have spent in prison. I regret my act beyond expression. But I am going to do all I can to make reparation."

Marjorie's eyes brightened. The words of Tubora Tumaida gave her heart. She fancied she was about to be set free. Imagine, then, her feelings when the King continued:

"I am going to make you one of my wives. You shall be the favorite of my harem. You shall be Queen of the Island of Taohoto."

Facing a lesser crisis, Marjorie probably would have done the natural thing for any woman to do when grievously shocked. She probably would have fainted. But in this—this affair of worse than life and death—she did not faint.

She stood erect. Her eyes flashed. Her lips were firm.

"Never!" she cried, "You may kill me, you may murder me in cold blood. But make me your wife, never! King though you may be upon this desert island, I am an American woman, and not your subject. I defy you! I defy you to hold me in captivity another day. Release me at once or have the United States of America and its army and navy to deal with in answer to your crimes."

Though probably he would not have admitted it, even to himself, for once Tubora Tumaida was glad he was a king in name only. Without the Japanese Government at his back, he would not have dared to thus insult the United States. But as it was he laughed in Marjorie's face.

"Take her back," he commanded to the guard, "We will bring this little termagant to terms. She will be my wife and on the day appointed, too."

Preparations for the wedding went on. Tubora Tumaida was too engrossed in the details of the function to take more than casual note of the fact that Maru had not been as regular a caller at the palace as usual. At first he was glad, for the visits of Maru seldom were pleasant ones. Then he became worried a bit, for it had been a full two weeks since he had seen the Jap. But the King drank too much wine to give any real concern to the absence of the agent of the Mikado.

Twice again Marjorie was called before Tubora Tumaida. Twice he repeated his vow to make her his wife, and twice more she answered him back as before—that not so long as the breath of life was in her body would she enter his harem. But when Marjorie made these defiant declarations she little reckoned the cruelty and the craft of the King of the Tahotians.

And, also, she little knew of certain other events which at that moment were transpiring elsewhere in the island.

The day for the great feast came. The night was perfect—perfect even for the South Seas, where wonderful nights are the rule. The fete, therefore, was held in the spacious gardens which surrounded the palace. The broad steps and the front portico were transformed into an elaborately draped stage. The tables of the King and the guests of honor were placed there, while the tables for the lesser guests were placed in the garden.

Shortly after sundown the guests assembled. First came the presentation of gifts to the King, a ceremonial which always preceded a state banquet. Then the feast began. As darkness came on, perfumed candles were lighted throughout the garden. In addition to illuminating the scene they dispensed hypnotizing odors, which, like wine, intoxicated all who inhaled them.

Between courses of wine the various native beauties, brought from divers sections of the island, duly were presented at court and the ritual read by the high priest, which formally united them in marriage to the polygamous monarch.

The night of revelry wore on. The various courses of meats and fruits were dispatched, and wine only was served. The scene degenerated into a drunken orgy which would have made one of the feasts of Nero look like a Sunday-school basket picnic in comparison.

The servants came forth with a new round of wine for every guest. The native band was playing a loud, garish air, not unlike American ragtime. The revelry had reached its climax. The high priest, a venerable patriarch with a flowing white beard and long robes, advanced from the stage and raised his hand for silence.

It was some moments before the riotous spirits of the guests could be stilled. At last the high priest spoke, in slow, solemn periods.

"We are assembled here tonight," he said, "in the palace of Tubora Tumaida, by the grace of our gods, the spirits of our royal ancestors, and heroes in war, to celebrate the most auspicious event ever commemorated in the history of our island kingdom. So great, it appears, has become the name and the fame of our present ruler that it has passed beyond the bounds of mortal life. The gods and the spirits who dwell in Mount Pepito have come to envy the greatness of our ruler and have sent one of their number to share his glories with him.

"The gods and the spirits of our ancestors held high council in their palace in the mountain, and elected to send the reincarnated spirit of Queen Ochiltree, who ruled us a century ago, to become the wife and consort of the mighty Tubora Tumaida."

The venerable high priest ceased to speak, and the assembled guests watched with bated breath as they saw in the background of the improvised stage a vision in white, supported on either side by a native guard, slowly advancing from the doorway of the palace out to the altar where the wedding ceremonial was to take place.

One scarcely would have recognized Marjorie, dressed in her royal bridal robes and loaded down with diamonds and jewels. From the gardens one could not see that under her robes steel handcuffs bound her hands. They did not know, as Marjorie did, that each of the guards carried a shining dagger, threatening to plunge it into her heart the instant she should cry out or attempt to thwart the carrying out of the ceremony as it had been planned. Marjorie, for all her threats, had been rendered powerless.

Marjorie, escorted by the guards, proceeded to the altar. Tubora Tumaida, with a wicked gleam in his eyes, left his table and made his way as best he could in his inebriated state, to the side of his prospective white queen.

The island monarch and his captive stood side by side amid the silence of the multitude. The high priest advanced before them, and raising his right hand to heaven, proceeded with the words of the ceremonial of marriage.

"And now, oh, spirit of Queen Ochiltree, by the laws and customs of the island I pronounce you wife and queen consort of our monarch, the great Tubora Tum——"

But the high priest never finished the sentence which would have made Marjorie the wife of the King.

Like a phantom shadow there had plunged from one of the branches of a tree, which grew hard by the portico, the powerful, yet nimble figure of a man. A drawn sword flashed over the heads of the high priest and the astonished Tubora Tumaida.

"In the name of the United States, I forbid this crime!" The man shouted. He wore the uniform of an officer of the United States Army. He was Lieut. Ralph Guthrie.

Marjorie's guards, who had fallen respectfully back a pace to permit the saying of the wedding ritual, advanced with their daggers drawn.

"Stand back!" commanded Guthrie in fearful tones, extending the point of his saber until it pricked the side of the guard close to him. "Whoever touches a hair on this girl's head dies like a dog!"

Brandishing his sword right and left and with his revolver drawn in his other hand, Lieutenant Guthrie forced a pathway through the startled guests who had crowded about, and, with Marjorie preceding him, made good his escape

THE GERMAN WOUNDED

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The Germans are terrifically systematic about their care of the wounded. All their men found on the battlefield receive a "First aid dressing". Each is tagged with a card, which indicates whether he is badly hurt or not. From the battlefield the wounded men are gotten back to the field hospitals or to headquarters. A man may be badly wounded and yet be back on the firing line in three months. Good pure blood is what helps the soldier through—his wounds heal easily after anticeptic dressings. It is well for everybody to put the blood in good order. Don't trifle with health! its too precious a possession.

It is trifling to neglect the little every-day kind of ailments. It is trifling, too, to take medicines of unknown or doubtful ingredients. If your stomach gets out of order, your food is not digested and, of course, your blood gets thin and you become weak, ready to be a prey to the disease germs always ready to attack the run-down and the anaemic. If your liver can't do its work, your blood becomes impure and many troubles follow. If your bowels are irregular, poisons accumulate in your body. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery (in tablet or liquid form) helps the stomach to digest food properly, strengthens the liver, regulates the bowels. As a consequence you are vigorous, full of snap and life! Fifty years ago Dr. Pierce discovered that a glyceric extract of Golden Seal and Oregon grape root, of queen's root and bloodroot with black cherry bark would aid all the digestive organs to work as Nature intended they should. Thousands have found that the "Golden Medical Discovery" he then introduced to the world has restored them to health when suffering from stomach and liver troubles. Now is the time to try this famous remedy.—Adv.

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from the garden before the astonished multitude could collect its senses. A cart waited at the outer gate. Here Guthrie perceived Marjorie was handcuffed. With a dexterous movement he freed her arms and helped her into the native conveyance.

Marjorie was striving hard to suppress her sobs. Capable words of thanks to express her gratitude would not come.

"Forgive me, please forgive me, if I have mistrusted you," she said weakly. "Please, won't you put me on a steamer, that I may go back home to my father?"

"No need to go home to see your father, my little one," said Guthrie tenderly. "Your father has come to you. You will see him in ten minutes."

The cart was driven to the docks. A huge white ship lay at anchor, ablaze with lights. As Marjorie leaned on Guthrie's arm and walked out on the pier, she noticed a portly figure clad in white duck army uniform step spryly down the gangplank.

"Father, father!" cried the girl as with a single bound she threw herself into the arms of Col. John Stuart Sigbee. The embrace lasted some minutes. Guthrie respectfully averted his gaze.

"Major Guthrie, permit me to congratulate you," the Colonel said at length. "I promote you on the spot, and already have cabled to Washington for confirmation. You have saved the life of my daughter, you have saved my honor, you have saved your country from a dreadful war."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MYSTERY CLEARS.

MARJORIE was struck with wonderment at her father's words. It all seemed like some fantastical dream, this magic-like appearance of her father, hale and hearty upon this faraway island. The last time she saw him he lay in a pool of his own blood, apparently lifeless. Now he stood grasping the hand and showering words of praise upon the man Marjorie believed her father's murderer and whom the Colonel was ordering his men to catch "dead or alive."

Swiftly Marjorie recounted the events of the last three months. Twice this man Guthrie had saved her from a dreadful fate at the risk and almost the cost of his own life. On the other hand, he had forced her to keep faith with a pledge which she saw as a plot against her father. He had employed every ruse and deception to gain his end. He had caused her to be kidnaped and carried halfway around the world.

What for? What did these amazing paradoxes mean? Marjorie's startled brain cried out for an answer. But Guthrie paved the way.

"Colonel," he said at length, "there are a number of things about myself, and the present business at hand I wish to clear up. Let us go to some place where we can talk. Miss Marjorie must be included in the conference. I know not how to make my apologies to her. In this whole affair she has born the greatest burdens and made the greatest sacrifices. I only hope she will agree that the end justified the means."

"Come right into my stateroom," Colonel Sigbee replied, leading the way aboard the ship.

And there Marjorie and her father seated themselves and listened, both equally awestricken, as Guthrie told his story of the six mysteries.

First, his identity. Guthrie was a secret operative of the National Board of Strategy.

Second, his original mission to Rosencrans. He was sent by the order of the War Department because it had been learned that Sato, Colonel Sigbee's late servant, was in reality a Japanese spy.

Third, the identity of Wright, his colleague. Wright, whose true name was Irving Wilson, also was an agent of the Strategy Board sent West to co-operate with Guthrie.

Fourth, Guthrie's disappearance from the hospital, simultaneously with the theft of the plans forwarded by Sanders. Guthrie had received secret word of Sato's theft of the plans. He could not entrust the capture of the Jap to any other than himself, so, injured as he was, he fled the hospital and was successful in apprehending Sato the night the Jap had made his identity known to the Colonel.

Fifth, Guthrie's mysterious visit to Colonel Sigbee the night the Colonel had determined to end his life. Guthrie came to return to the Colonel the stolen plans, disclose his identity, and offer cooperation in the carrying out of the Colonel's original plans of the secret war. But the Colonel's wrought-up state of mind and his subsequent attempt to end his own life averted this. Guthrie escaped under the most suspicious conditions as he could not make his identity publicly known.

Sixth, the kidnaping of Marjorie. Guthrie and Wright had planned to carry out Sigbee's plan of the secret seizure of the island alone. They dared not leave Marjorie in the United States for fear her distorted knowledge of the facts would lead to their apprehension and upsetting of the plans. To the Black Four, leaders of a California anti-Japanese society, it was represented that Marjorie was a Japanese s[illegible]

Then Guthrie followed with a modest account of his adventures on the island He had vanquished Hugi, the headhunter, with his own hand, and rescued Wright who had been taken captive. Subsequently Wright had left for Japan on other business.

Guthrie then told of carrying out the plan of the secret warfare against Japan, as Colonel Sigbee had outlined it, singlehanded. With Hugi out of the way, Guthrie captured Maru and, seizing the wireless station on the island, had communicated the fact to the Tokio Government and dispatched Wright to Japan to formally arrange peace. For Guthrie, unaided, had declared war on the Mikado, and aided only by his assistant, Wright, had carried it to victory. Next, Guthrie fired the ammunition stored in the extinct crater of Mount Pepito. It was the explosion of this that the people on the island had thought an eruption and which made possible Tubora Tumaida's attempt to make Marjorie his bride.

With Maru in Guthrie's power, Japan was forced to capitulate to obtain his release, as the services of the Mikado's strategist were needed at once in China where Japan was operating against the German fortress.

Guthrie wired the successful conclusion of his [illegible] to Washington, adding that their s[illegible] due solely to the fact that Colonel Sigbee had so skillfully prepared all plans for the secret war. The Government, in response, had ordered Colonel Sigbee to proceed posthaste to Taohoto in a United States cruiser.

Colonel Sigbee confessed to his daughter his attempt at suicide. At Rosencrans it still was believed an attempt to murder. But Guthrie, instead of being his slayer, had saved the Colonel. The bullet had inflicted only a trifling flesh wound, but the Colonel in his nerve-wrecked condition had fainted away, apparently dead.

Thus the mysteries were made clear, and thus Guthrie, despite his modesty of recital, stood forth the pre-eminent hero of the episode. Marjorie held the Major's—for it was Major Guthrie now—hand longer than she at first realized, as Guthrie bade her good night.

"And I must be going now," the young Major replied to her good night. "I wish you pleasant hours of repose."

"What? Going? You are not going to leave us?" Marjorie asked apprehensively.

"Not going to leave you for good," Guthrie replied. "But it's business before pleasure. I must go ashore and free Sanders and Tecumseh who still are prisoners and inform the presumptuous King that he is about to become a citizen of the United States—for Taohoto is to be formally declared annexed to the Philippine Islands in a few days."

The iridescent, copper-colored sun hung as if at anchor in the Pacific next morning at dawn. Yet Marjorie was aboard on the deck of the cruiser. A strange uneasiness oppressed her for all her restful night's repose. For all Guthrie's assurances, she could not help but fear that perhaps he would never come back—that she would never see him again. While maiden-like, she was loath to confess it even to her own heart, yet it was true—she loved him since the very first night she had met him—the night of the rescue from the hands of the Mexicans. It was this tender passion that intensified her agonies when circumstances seemed to prove him a blackguard and a traitor.

And now, just as he had disclosed himself as her human ideal and delivered her from death and her father from dishonor, was he, through a mistaken sense of propriety, to pass out of her life forever?

But Marjorie's question was answered sooner than she expected. A footstep on the deck interrupted her reverie. It was Guthrie. He advanced toward the rail where Marjorie stood contemplating the sunrise. Raising his cap and bidding her a pleasant good morning, the Major drew from his pocket a cablegram and passed it over to Marjorie. It bore the official seal of the War Department. It read:

"President ready to issue proclamation of annexation of Taohoto as soon as arrangements are completed at your end. Col. John S. Sigbee, in recognition of his services in planning the campaign which you so successfully carried out, is hereby named as military Governor of the island. You are given the choice of being his aid-de-camp or proceeding to Russia on other official business. Please let us hear your decision in this regard at once."

(Continued on page seventeen.)

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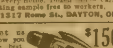

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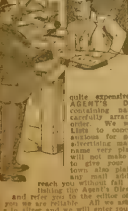

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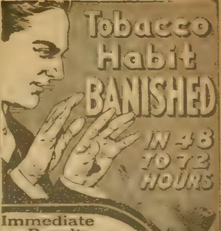
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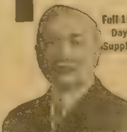

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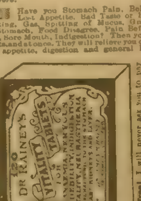


Constant Occupation.

Tramp—"Once I was well known as a wrestler, mum"

[illegible]—"And do you wrestle now?"

[illegible]—"Only with poverty, mum."

HORRORS OF PEACE.

He fought and bled his land to save;
And yet he was no soldier brave.
The land was just the farm that fed him,
And as he fought the lawyers bled him

Jones' Great Fertilizer Scheme

Dangerous.

Ssh—this is a ghostly place'

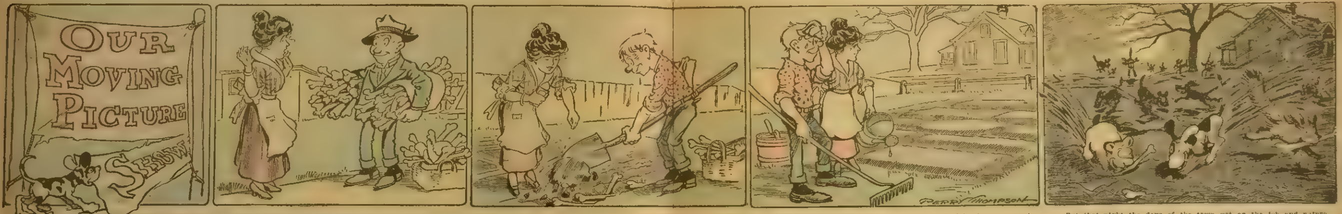
Sssh—why?"

Sssh—even the rooms communicate with one another!"

No Need to Stop.

Cholly—"Before I met you I thought of nothing but making money'

Ethel—"Well keep right on' Pop [illegible] as rich as folks think!"



Mrs. Jones—"Why, Jasper, what on earth are you going to do with all those bones?"
Jones—"Just watch me!"

Jones—"You see, with all these bones for fertilizer we'll have the finest flower-beds in this town

"That was hard, hot work, but we have certainly done our part, now let nature do the rest."

But that night the dogs of the town got on the job and nature didn't have a chance

All Right in His Case.

Mrs. Timkins was taking her son to school for the first time, and after impressing the schoolmaster with the necessity of his having a thorough education, finished up by saying: "And be sure he learns Latin

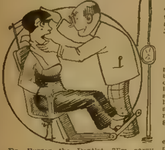
"But, my dear madam," said the schoolmaster, "Latin is a dead language"

"All right," said Mrs. Timkins; "he'll want it. He's going to be an undertaker."

Motion to Postpone.

"Can we squeeze in this crowded car?" asked the polite but timid young [illegible]

"Maybe, Charley," replied the sweet thing; "but don't you think we'd better wait until we get home?"



Dr. Buzzer the Dentist—"I'm sorry, but I'll have to extract that tooth."

Mrs. Tungtwist—"I don't like to lose it unless you can fit me with a substitooth."

Too Angry to Sleep.

"Do you ever wake up your wife getting in late nights?"

"Never"

"How the deuce do you manage it?"

"She is never asleep.

A Hiatus Defined.

Clem Huggins, orator, statesman, attorney Democrat, and also well known, was addressing a meeting of the general council in behalf of one of his clients, namely, the sinking-fund commission, which collects licenses and soaks away the money taken in to pay some of the city's most pressing debts in the future. The sinking fund had a revenue measure it wished passed to round out a series of license ordinances. Let Mr. Huggins explain.

"This measure is made necessary because it has been found that there is a hiatus in the circus and wild-animal-show law that has never been taken care of.

"There's no reason why hiatuses shouldn't pay a license, just like other wild animals," said some one, swayed by Mr. Huggins' oratory. "What is a hiatus, anyway?"

"A hiatus," spoke up Councilman Thomas Dolan, "is no animal at all. It's that space between where the vest ends and the pants begin when the two don't join as they should. That's a hiatus."

Mr Huggins certainly uses big words

Already Provided.

Mrs Naggs has a reputation for meanness. One day, while ordering some meat to be delivered later on, she ordered two cents' worth of cat's meat for puss. She lived a considerable distance from the shop, and just as the messenger was leaving with the order Mrs. Naggs' maid appeared, and in a state of breathlessness explained: "Has the missis' meat gone yet?"

"Just going," replied the assistant.

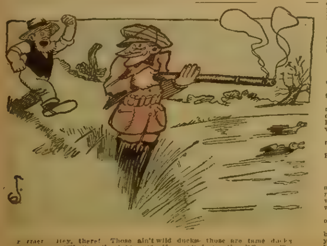
"Oh, thank goodness I am in time!" she exclaimed. "You must not send the cat's meat, the cat has just caught a bird."

The Height of Stinginess.

"Speaking of stingy people," said the shopkeeper, reflectively, "there's no one can beat old Scrimp."

"What about him?" queried the customer who had come in for a pound of coffee

"Why, he even looks over the tops of his glasses for fear of wearing them out!"

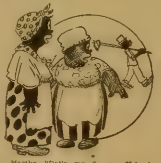


Farmer—"Hey, there! Those ain't wild ducks—those are tame ducks"
Sportsman—"That's all right—my wife won't know the difference!"

Righteous Indignation.

Mrs. Gibbs—"John, while you're home Sunday can't you carry out the ashes and save fifty cents for having a man do it tomorrow?"

Gibbs—"Woman, would you sooner have me break the Sabbath than a dollar bill?"



Martha—"Dat's my fiance. He's in de minin' business."

Mrs. Jones—"What kind of minin', honey?"

Martha—"Why, calciminin'"

In the Time of the Blue Moon.

"Good morning. Is this a millinery establishment?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, my name is Smith. I am Mrs. Smith's husband. Was Mrs. Smith here?"

"Yes, sir—she was here yesterday afternoon."

"All the afternoon?"

"Yes, sir; trying on hats. She tried on fourteen and liked every one of them."

"Indeed. And what did she do then?"

"She said she was sorry, sir, but couldn't afford any of them, so she went away."

"Without buying any?"

"Yes, sir."

"As I thought. Well, do 'em all up. Charge 'em to me and I'll take 'em home to her. Wife never had enough hats, anyway."

"Thank you, sir. Will that be all?"

"All for this week. Next week I'll drop in and buy some more. Nothing like hats when you love your wife. Ta, ta"—Life.

A Similar Affliction.

A gentleman on the platform of a railway station said to a small boy:

"Can you t-t-ell m-me w-what t-t-time the next train g-goes?

The small boy did not answer. He merely grinned. The gentleman put his question again, with the same result. He then rode angrily away. A youth who was standing near said to the boy:

"Why did you not answer the gentleman?" The boy laughed ruefully.

"Do you think I w-wanted a l-licking? He'd th-think I w-was m-mocking him"

Mike's Explanation.

Two travelers who had just arrived in a large town were coming out of the railway station when a watering cart was passing, and Pat, on seeing the water spraying, shouted after the driver:

"Hi, hi, mister, your cart's running out!"

Mike, his companion, thinking he knew better, turned to Pat and said, "Shut up, ye silly, can't ye see that's to keep the kids from catching on behind?"

SPRING SONG.

When the breezes blow soft in the spring
And the boughs all in harmony swing,
And the birds, small and sweet,
Feel no frost in their feet
As they make preparations to sing —
Tweet, tweet!—
Open wide their glad faces to sing:

When the grass groweth green here and there
And the overcoat seeketh its lair,
And the fierce woolen sock
In the bureau we lock,
And go out in that lighter spring wear—
I'll swear
I'm in love with that openwork wear:

When the temperature's certain to suit
The young bud that's beginning to shoot,
And the old fellows drowse
In the sun by the house,
And for labor no man gives a hoot—
Toot, toot!
Not a single, uncensorized hoot:

Oh, I feel in my marrow bones then
That the season is come on me when
I must mournfully bring
Spade, rake—any old thing—
And attend to the garden again—
Dad bing!
That detestable garden again!

A High Opinion.

"I understand," said a visitor from Philadelphia to a friend in Boston, "that you have so high an opinion of your city that you think Heaven must be like Boston."

"Well," was the reply, with a shrug of the shoulders, "I believe I did say so some time ago, but you know Boston has improved a great deal in the last few years"

Worried.

"Henry," said she, "you look very pale. What's the trouble?"

"I was stung to the quick by an adder this afternoon."

"Heavens! How did it happen?"

"Why, I dropped in at the bank and the bookkeeper told me my account was overdrawn.

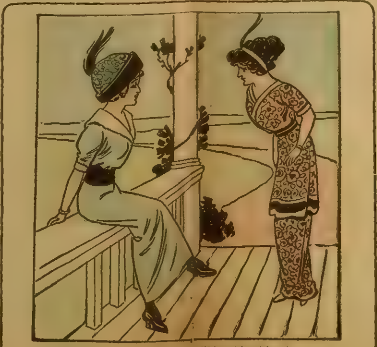
Served.

Old lady (irritably)—"Here, boy, I've been waiting some time to be waited on."

Druggist Boy—"Yes, ma'am. What can I do for you?"

Old Lady—"I want a stamp."

Druggist Boy—"Yes, ma'am. Will you have it licked or unlicked?"



"They have come to wreck, it seems, on life's matrimonial sea."
"Indeed?"
"And which rocked the boat?"

At One A. M.

You may softly sneak in through the hall
With the utmost of care,
And by feeling the side of the wall
Gain the top of the stair.

You may glide through the dark with much skill,
But your efforts fall flat
And your strategy all counts for nil
When you step on the cat.

His Wild Threat.

At a county fair in a small inland city several hundred men were engaged in holding down a large balloon which was rapidly being inflated with hot air. The smallest man of the lot looked about him nervously, and then yelled at the top of his voice:

"Hey, come and take my place, somebody! I've got to go."

No one paid any attention to him. A few moments later the little man bawled:

"If somebody don't come and take my place right away, I'm going to let the old thing go up."—Judge

More to Be Feared.

Don't you get tired of finding fault?"

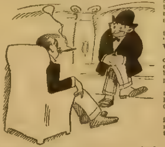
"No," replied the patient man of responsibilities. "I suppose people have a right to discover faults. What I object to is the man who assumes that faults exist and never troubles himself to investigate"

Plenty of Time.

"Sit down and let's have a good talk. I have a free hour."

"Aren't you going out with your wife?"

"Yes, but she just called down she'd be ready in a minute."



Rubb—"Do you want to know a dead sure way of getting rich

Dubb—"No; tell me an impossible way of getting poor, if you want my love!"

A Colored Philosopher.

One hot July afternoon Rastus Johnson, a gentleman of color, and his family of nine, who depended almost entirely on the town for their support, started away from home all togged out in their best, each carrying a supply of eatables One of their benefactors happened to meet them on the road.

"Well, Uncle Rastus, where are you going with all your family so dressed up?" he asked

"Well, boss," said Sam, "doan' you know the circus am come to town?"

"Yes, but you can't afford to take all your family to the circus."

"Well, I'll tell yer, boss, it's jes' dis away with us. We done sol' de heatin' stove 'cause de winter am fur off—but de circus am here!"

The Bored Editor Retaliates.

"And this," said the alleged old soldier, pestering a long-suffering editor who was really an old soldier, "is where the Arabs were massed in front of us Here," pointing to another place on a dirty pocket map, "is where our division was drawn up in zareba. We deployed in this direction and our left wing was attacked by the enemy on this knoll. Just at this point I was wounded on the left shoulder and a hundred yards farther on I got my right arm shattered by a piece of our own shells, and——"

"But," interrupted the bored editor, "where did you get your brains blown out?"

A Useless Question.

"Is dat a kickin' mule?" asked Erastus Pinkley

"Does you want to buy him?" inquired Uncle Rasbury, cautiously

"No."

"Den what's de use o' comin' aroun here axin' useless questions an' temptin' me to spoil my reputation foh truth an' mendacity fer nuthin'?"

Sad Case.

The worried countenance of the bridegroom disturbed the best man. Tiptoeing up the aisle, he whispered:

"What's the matter, Jock? Have ye lost the ring?"

"No," blurted out the unhappy Jock, "the ring's safe eno'. But, mon, I've lost ma enthusiasm."

Gwendolyn.

The foxiness of father was referred to at a recent social affair when Senator George Sutherland of Utah was reminded of an incident along that line

Some time ago, the Senator said, a pretty little baby girl arrived at a happy suburban home and immediately the entire family, including aunts, cousins and mothers-in-law, were busy selecting an appropriate name

"Harry," joyously cried mother when the old man returned home one evening "I have decided on a name for the baby! We will call her Gwendolyn!"

For a moment father did a hard piece of thinking. The name Gwendolyn sounded to him like a fire whistle out of tune, but he knew better than openly to oppose mother Therefore he grew foxy

"Gwendolyn! Gwendolyn!" he musingly replied "I like that a whole lot, dear Long before I met you I had a girl named Gwendolyn, and she——"

"Who said anything about Gwendolyn?" icily interjected wifey. "Your hearing must be defective. I said we will call the baby Mary, after my mother."

Susie's Cheap Skate.

They sat out on the old pier

"My beau is so romantic," said Shanty Mamie rapturously "Why, only last night he looked at me dreamily, like real poets do, an' said 'Drink to me only wid thine eyes.' Ain't that the dandy, though?

Tenement Susie turned up her nose

"What a cheap skate!" she jeered "Why, a feller that couldn't say, 'Drink to me only wid soda water,' an' then treat you to two glasses, ain't worth standin' room at a truant officers' picnic

Very Bad Indeed.

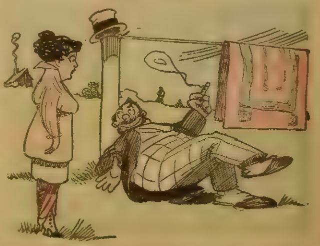
The sympathetic caller could see that things were wrong in the household

"Your husband has been ill?" she said

"Yes," said the worried-looking woman. "Very. I do my best to please him but nothing seems to satisfy him"

"Is his condition critical?"

"Critical!" exclaimed the woman "It's worse than critical; it's abusive."



Mrs. Huumf—"Say, if you're going to beat those rugs you'd better get started"

Everett Wrest—"Lady, for two bits I can't afford a self starter."

Going to Economize

Wife—"This house isn't a bit too big Those two extra rooms can be used as storerooms

Husband—Huh! What will you store in 'em?

"You said I must be very economical, didn't you?"

"Of course"

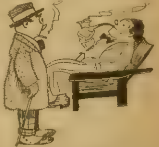
"Well, I'll soon get them filled with things I buy at bargain sales and can't use"

Qualifying His Admission.

The village board of strategy had the old codger entirely surrounded and were charging him from all sides, and as a result the veteran was in a state of hectic savagery

"You will at least acknowledge, squire," sarcastically said Sanford Merton, "that a sieve has holes in it."

"Yes," snarled the venerable curmudgeon; "but not so gosh darned many as there might be"—Judge



Timpson—"Do you think your sister would accept me if I should propose?"

Simpson—"Well, I don't want to say anything to discourage you, but I think she would."

The Change in Erica

Or, A Love Story of Finland

By De Lysle Ferree Cass

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CHAPTER VIII.

YAN was awakened from his sleep by a tremendous pounding on the house door. When he opened it, growling and surly, he was amazed to have Henryk rush dripping by him into the house.

"What are you doing here?" the fisherman asked roughly. "Are you drunk again tonight?"

The notary's son turned upon him a pair of wolfishly gleaming eyes. "No, not drunk yet," he said, with a rasping laugh. "I am the bearer of tidings from your chaste bride-to-be."

"What?" snarled Yan, seizing him fiercely by the shoulders with such a grip that the fellow winced under it. "What can you know about her that I do not know? I left her not an hour ago about to seek her bed."

Henryk burst into shrill laughter—a hideous sound. "You left her, yes," he jeered, "but not to seek her bed—not that. She is gone to see her lover, the Englishman, who owns the yacht out there on the fiord!"

Yan struck him brutally on the mouth with his huge clinched fist, cutting the tale-bearer's lips so that the blood ran.

"You lie!" he hissed, but with a dreadful sinking of the heart. "I will tear you to pieces for this slander"

"Best do it after you have seen whether or not she is at home, as you think," mumbled Henryk, shrinking away from the blind fury in the fisherman's eyes. "I tell you that she went aboard the yacht to him all alone. She slipped away after you left her. She tricked even old Nils, who ran after her. She is on the boat now with the Englishman's arms around her, his breath hot on her face. Did you think she was going to lie awake the whole night dreaming of you?"

With a ferocious imprecation, Yan picked the tattler up in his arms as if he were a mere child, and tossed him bodily into the glowing embers of the fireplace. He thrust his rough woolen shirt into his trousers, pulled on his long elkskin boots and seized his oilskins from the walls. Out into the raging tempest he rushed, buttoning his clothes about him as he ran.

"It is a lie; a lie! a foul lie!" he kept bellowing. "I will find her in her bed asleep, with her little rosy face pillowed on one arm and her golden hair done into two long braids. It is a lie of Henryk's! It is I whom she loves—I! I!"

He burst open the door of old Nils' cottage with a heave of one mighty shoulder. He rushed past old Hilda in her night-shift and straight into Erica's chamber. He ran his calloused hands over the coverlets to assure himself that she was underneath them. Nothing! Nothing! She was gone! He stumbled back into the outer room as if dazed. As he did so, old Nils appeared wretchedly at the doorway.

"Gone?" said Yan, speaking thickly, as if he had difficulty in articulation

"Gone," mumbled old Nils, as he crept shivering, with chattering teeth, before the embers of the fire.

Yan cast himself face downward on the floor and lay there without either sound or motion all the rest of the night through.

CHAPTER IX.

AT DAYBREAK, when the fury of the storm was spent, Yan arose with the haggard face of one who has barely survived a severe illness. Both of the old people lay huddled in the sleep of exhaustion in another corner of the room Yan made no attempt to awaken them.

For a long time he stood framed in the doorway, letting the fresh sea breeze cool his burning forehead. His mind lay under the shadow of calamity, yet his senses were peculiarly acute The smallest things seemed to possess an interest for him. He noted a little bit of yet green grass under a large stone, that he had never noticed before; he was interested in the fluttering about of two brown birds whose nest had been blown down by the night's storm. He stood thus for a long time, his shoulders hunched, his hands hanging awkwardly at his sides.

Finally he put on his sou'wester and went dreamily along the rough path leading to the heads of the cliffs, whence a fine view of the fiord down below and the great sea beyond it could be obtained. This was his wedding day, though Yan did not think of that just then. Instead, he was ruminating dully.

"Perhaps this morning the Englishman is tired of her, and will send her back here to us. Maybe, after all, he has not touched her yet. Perhaps I shall see her walking along the yacht's deck—perhaps——"

He had reached the commanding headland and swept his eyes out over the fiord, where, for the past two months the vessel had lain moored. He looked, rubbed his eyes, and looked again with the bewildered air of one who is trying to convince himself of an impossibility. Then, suddenly, he came out of his trance. The fury of the night returned upon him tenfold.

"It is gone!" he shrieked madly. "He has taken her away with him, stolen her away where I shall never see her again. Oh, God! that she should have gone out to him there!"

The instinct of his race was strong in Yan. Revenge clamored for satic' in his blood. It occurred to him that the yacht could not have gone far out to sea. They would not have dared brave the infinite archipelago of islets and granite teeth-like rocks which studded the Bothnian Gulf. No mariner, however foolhardy, would venture that in the face of such a storm as that in which the Englishman had lifted anchor. No, the yacht must needs be yet nearby along the coast. It would head southward, since the north was one huge ice-field. It would have to progress slowly unless they had aboard a pilot who was experienced in the crazy windings of the channel. Yan felt sure they had no such assistance. A fierce joy illuminated his face for a moment.

"I will pursue them!" he shouted. "And I will take her away from him—not that I may have her afterwards, but so that he cannot. It may be, too, that she has left here unwillingly. Perhaps, after all, she is innocent and we have misunderstood the appearances of things. I will follow after them and see. It is hard to believe that my sweet Erica is a light woman."

Yan's actions were coincident with his thoughts. Within ten minutes, and without a word to any one concerning his project, he was embarked in his fishing smack and rowing strongly down the fiord. It was only the matter of a quarter of an hour before he had rounded the headlands and felt the sea swell strike his craft. There was a swift east wind blowing as he hoisted his single much-pitched sail and was soon slipping along rapidly, leaving a foaming path in his wake.

It was impossible for him to avoid passing through the fishing fleet of his comrades a little to the south of his home fiord. They, seeing him thus steering straight out to sea and in his old clothes on his wedding day, were much astonished and called to him: "Whither away, Yan? Why aren't you off at the church ashore there?" and so on. He made them no answer at all, but kept his hand on the tiller, his eyes fixed stonily ahead of him. By and by the fisher boats were left far behind him and Yan could see no more recognizable landmarks along shore. He had never sailed his boat so far away from home as this before, but he felt no timidity in doing it, for to be afraid one must think of one's self, and Yan's thoughts were all of Erica. He was hugging the hope to his soul that he still might find her sweet and pure as when he left her last night. Last night! How long ago that seemed to him!

The day passed drearily for the fisherman. The fact that the breezy, sun-kissed sea was fresh and invigorating today seemed the subtlest irony to him. Great white gulls skimmed lightly over the tops of the dancing waves, screaming as they stared with their beady black eyes at this solitary voyager who noticed them not. Yan ran by innumerable islands—some of fair size, others mere ragged granite teeth projecting from the water. All were barren, desolate, devoid of vegetation. There were so many of them that geographers had not even troubled to give them names. The only people who ever came there were men in search of seals, of which Yan saw not a few sunning themselves on the rocks with idiotic expressions on their faces. At the approach of the boat they would slide into the water with great splashes. At another time Yan would have been greatly interested in the animals. Now, though, he only kept his fierce eyes scanning the horizon ahead of him. The sunset came, night fell and with it the wind died out. The sail hung motionless, and only the tide made the boat move at all.

Yan was mentally and physically exhausted. Even his iron physique could not stand the strain that had been put upon it in the last crowded twenty-four hours. He felt himself to be on the verge of utter breakdown. Yet he dared not close his eyes to rest lest at any moment he run foul of one of the menacing black rocks that made navigation here so perilous. He only held his heavy eyelids open by sheer force of will.

Adding to the dangers and difficulties of steering his way safely through the passage, a great fog gathered upon the surface of the ocean. It was clammy, white, impenetrable. It rolled in vast billows down around him. It was sticky to the touch and cold. It hid the rocks and shoals from Yan's sight, so that he had literally to feel his way along by poking out an oar now to the left, now to the right, to see if it struck anything. Yan seemed all alone on earth.

That long night passed at last, though it would have been hard to say just when the day dawned. It was not like daybreak on other mornings. Now it was only pale, pale light that filtered through the damp chilliness of the fog

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and fell upon the grim voyager like the reflection of dead sunlight. It did not dissipate the billowing gray void around him. Beyond the gunwale of his boat everything seemed diaphanous, impalpable, unreal. It was impossible to discern which was sea and which was vapor. The horizon line was obliterated.

The mist penetrated Yan's bones as no actual cold would have done. His oilskins glistened with moisture and the breath steamed from his nostrils. The long hours of ceaseless watching had painted blue circles under his eyes and drawn hard lines around his mouth. He had the appearance of an old man who had suffered much. His bones ached with sitting too long in that one posture.

Every little while the boom of breakers against unseen rocks would catch his ear. Then he would pull strongly on that side of the boat until he would be warned by a similiar sound in the other direction. Sometimes the roar would sound on both sides of him at once, and he would go forward very cautiously until out of the passage. He was very much afraid that he might slip past the yacht in the fog without knowing it. Therefore he strained his ears to catch the slightest sounds.

The opaque veil surrounding him did not lift all of that morning. The uncanny voyage through the archipelago continued, though the man's teeth chattered, though his face was blue from stagnated blood, though a kind of ague shook his mighty frame with constant tremors. He yawned continually and battled grimly with the deadly lassitude that was creeping slowly but surely over his senses. A sort of prayer was always in his mind.

"Dear God! let me find her still good as she was before!"

He had lost all sense of direction, and did not know where the current might be taking him. The lap, lap, lap of the water sounded in his ears like the ticking of a watch in an empty room.

Suddenly an alien sound caught his straining sensibilities—the muffled sound of voices through the impenetrable fog. His being vibrated with a wild hope. He tried to make out from which direction the sounds had come.

Then he caught the rattle of big chains as they slipped through hawser holes. Some kind of a large vessel was near him, and he knew that they must be taking soundings as to the depth of the water. Evidently it was some one unused to navigation in these parts.

"It is surely the yacht," Yan told himself feverishly. "Pray Heaven I find her good and pure."

Then all at once a great black shape loomed threateningly directly before him—specter through the writhing haze. It towered high over his head as if it were about to topple over upon him. He was quite near before he knew it. Simultaneously shouts hailed him from the deck:

"Boat ahoy! boat ahoy! Heave alongside! What place is this?"

Yan could not understand the words, but he recognized the intonation to be English. A trembling seized him.

"I have found them!" he breathed.

A rope was thrown to him from the deck and he made fast his boat to it. They lowered a ladder to him and strong hands pulled his dripping figure up over the taffrail. He slouched there, looking about the trim deck furtively and avoiding the eyes of the sailors. His appearance was anything but prepossessing.

"It is a fisherman," said they. "Let us take him in to his lordship, who understands their outlandish language."

Yan was conducted across the white decks down the hatchway stairs. Polished brass balustrades shone on each side of him. A sailor shoved him through the door of a saloon which was fitted up with the magnificence of a palatial drawing-room. Evidences of wealth were displayed on every hand. There were many objects the very use of which was unknown to Yan. Electric bulbs filled the apartment with a blaze of light that half blinded the fisherman. His great soggy boots sunk into soft carpets. The splendor of the place bewildered him.

"Here is a stray fisherman, your lordship," said Yan's conductor. "Maybe he can pilot us out of this accursed fog."

Gradually Yan's eyes had become accustomed to the brilliance of the illumination. He saw before him a table upon which stood the remains of a sumptuous repast set for two persons. He observed a man reclining in a large Morris chair —a man unnaturally pale and with lack-luster eyes, as if he were just recovering from a severe illness. Yan recognized him at once.

"Pan Andreas!" he shouted. "It is Pan Andreas, the Englishman!"

The violence, the fierce exultation of his tone aroused the sick man from his torpor so that he half started up, his hands grasping the broad arms of his chair, his eyes questioning the bedraggled figure in front of him. At the same moment the door leading into an inner cabin opened, and framed the lissome figure of Erica.

"Yan!" she exclaimed, her red lips remaining parted and her eyes opening wide with mingled astonishment, joy and relief. "Oh, Yan, is it really you?"

The fisherman had no understanding of her words. Externals held his whole attention. He remarked the rich red blood that flooded up into her lovely face at the sight of him. He took in each exquisite detail of the Parisian gown which accentuated the gently curving contour. The low-cut bodice, the short sleeves, the rustle of silk skirts, the corsage that had never before restrained and molded her supple waist, struck him like successive stabs with a knife. He saw in this elegance only the purple raiment of Babylon, the artificial enticements of the courtesan. He remembered that Erica must have come aboard bare-legged in her short red skirt and the black velvet vest, such as all Finnish women wear. These, then, were the wages of sin in which she had adorned herself for the delectation of her foreign lover. Yet he could not take his burning eyes off the alluring picture she made there.

The determined animosity of the man —the steady glare of his sunken eyes, struck Erica with a sudden timidity. She had never seen him look like this at her before.

"Yan, dear Yan, what is the matter with you?" she asked, advancing swiftly to his side, with eyes ashine and both hands outstretched. "We are so glad you have come. Are you not pleased to see me again?" As she asked the question she crimsoned yet more.

Yan told himself that she blushed for shame. He made no offer to take her welcoming hands. She paused irresolutely, tears trembling in her voice and one hand involuntarily pressing her heart.

"Yan, speak to me!" she cried. "Tell me how you came here and if you do not think me beautiful in these things that Pan Andreas has given me! Are they not much finer than the little wedding dress on which I sewed that night I saw you last?"

Something snapped with a report like thunder in Yan's brain. Objects blurred before his vision and swam dizzily in a kind of blood haze. With a hoarse cry he turned and fled from them—those two—and rushed up the hatchway stairs. He did not hear Erica's wild cries bidding him come back as she followed him. A roaring in his ears prevented that. He raised his voice in unstrung, idiotic laughter.

"High Heaven!" he shrieked. "I have squandered all my love upon a wanton!"

A great splash marked where he leaped into the vague, shimmering waters of the ocean, but the fog hid the ripples that widened around the spot. Both Erica and Sir Andrew, hurrying after him, saw the plunge. Hysteria seized the girl and she would have leaped overboard to share his fate had not Sir Andrew caught her about the waist. He shouted orders to lower away boats to the rescue. Blocks and tackle rattled, men manned the longboats and the fog swallowed them too. Almost immediately afterwards encouraging shouts reached the ears of the frenzied girl struggling in Sir Andrew's arms.

"Ahoy aboard! We have him! Throw us a rope!"

"Do you hear, my child?" asked Sir Andrew. "They have saved him. They are bringing your Yan aboard again and you will be happy with him yet."

The girl's weight went suddenly heavy on Sir Andrew's supporting arms. Erica had swooned away.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Yan opened his eyes again more than twenty-four hours had elapsed. The yacht was steaming up the old familiar fiord, on the cliffs skirting which stood his father's and old Nils' cottages. The fog was gone and the sun sparkling on the dancing waters made it seem good to be yet alive.

The terrible strain he had been under for the two long days and nights had completely unnerved the young fisherman. His suicidal plunge into the icy sea had marked the breaking point where nature could stand no more. He had lain in Sir Andrew's own soft bed, tossing feverishly to and fro and muttering incoherent things which had before been dark to the devotedly solicitous Erica. Not once during those long, trying hours would she leave his bedside, for, as she naively explained to Sir Andrew: "He might awaken and miss me." A new and more womanly tenderness had come over her as his ravings unfolded his heart secrets before her. She attended him with the maternal instinct that is latent in women. She was conscious of a great change in herself. She felt that she would not be ashamed to ask Yan to love in her way now.

Yan's first sight on regaining consciousness was her softened face bending over him. His hands groped feebly for hers and found them. A great sigh of content escaped his lips.

"What a bad dream I have had," he whispered, and then turned over and went quietly to sleep. Sir Andrew assured Erica that his convalescence was a mere matter of days now.

Yan awoke again at dinner time, when the yacht had dropped anchor in her old moorings in the fiord. Erica was as ever seated by his bedside and Sir Andrew stood near her, rather pale, but otherwise seemingly his old self

(Continued on page seventeen.)

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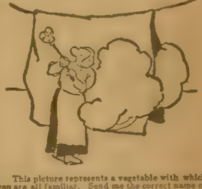

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THE CHANGE IN ERICA.

(Continued from page fifteen.)

again. Observing Yan's eyes open, he patted Erica gently on the golden head, and, with a slow, sad smile at her, discreetly tiptoed out of the cabin.

"I am very hungry, Erica," said Yan, his voice already stronger.

She had the steward bring him in a tray of steaming food that brightened the sick man's eyes. He sniffed at it in something of his old way and fell to, eating slowly to enjoy every bite. While he ate, Erica told him the true story, of which he had heard only a distorted version: How the terrible storm had blown the yacht from its moorings and out to sea, willy-nilly their wishes, where they had become lost in the fog; how kindly and considerately Sir Andrew had treated her because she so reminded him of his dead daughter; how he had even permitted her to exchange the spray-drenched garments in which she had come aboard, for a gown from the sea chest that had been his dear departed wife's. Also she explained the motive which had brought her to seek him that eventful night—how sick he had been and how the perils of the storm had literally braced him into well-being again. She told it all timidly, but straightforwardly, her eyes brimming tenderness all the while. When she had finished, Yan was silent for a while in contrition.

"But I thought when I saw your fine clothes," he said. "I thought that—that——"

"Do not tell me what you thought, Yan," murmured Erica, flushing painfully.

"Very well," he answered. "I will not say another word."

"It will be very dull here, then," said the girl. "You must talk some."

Yan felt himself to be getting out of his conversational depths again. "How can I explain if you will not let me tell you what I thought?" he asked, querulously, like a little child.

Erica let her long lashes veil her eyes. "Tell me what you THINK, good Yan," she said softly.

An inspiration came to the usually slow-witted fisherman. He said: "Well, then, I think that I love you, Erica."

"And do you only think that, my Yan?" she whispered. "Do you not know it?"

She hid her burning cheeks from his gaze against the broad chest that seemed made for her repose. When he pried her head up again, so that he could kiss her, Yan was a wiser man, but he was surprised to see tears in her eyes.

"Why, Erica, little sweetheart!" he cried gruffly, so that she might not see how he, too, was affected. "Why do you cry thus when you are happy?"

"It is the way of a maid," murmured she, and nestled the closer in his arms.

The End.

* * *

AMERICA'S SECRET WAR

(Continued from page eleven.)

"And I may add," said Guthrie, as Marjorie finished reading the message, "that all arrangements have been completed. I wound up the business last night. Your father already is Governor of the island. Tubora Tumaida has fled for his life. The Colonel may occupy the royal palace today. The natives long have desired American rule."

"But you," Marjorie said, averting her face for fear the tears might come, "I suppose you will be off for Russia now That's just the way with you heartless men."

"Well, that depends," Guthrie said.

"Upon what?" Marjorie questioned

"It depends upon you." Guthrie held forth both his arms appealingly. There could be no mistaking his meaning. Marjorie hesitated a moment in glad surprise and then with a joyous little cry sprang into Guthrie's arms.

"And there will be a wedding in the royal palace of Taohoto, won't there?" Guthrie was saying at length.

"And it can be none to soon for the bride-to-be," Marjorie said laughingly. "Come, let's break the news to dad."

The End

* * *

FOR SCOTLAND'S QUEEN

(Continued from page three.)

She was silent for a moment.

"How are you coming on with Cecil?" she abruptly asked. "Is he so deep in the toils that you cannot find for him a way out?"

I was startled by her words. Had she discovered the meaning of the secret meetings at Surrey House?

"Your brother, Lady Elenora," I replied, "has a mind of his own and being [illegible] of discretion, must, therefore, know what is to his own welfare."

"[illegible] with such companions as those [illegible] hither, is it not a question [illegible] his mind is his own now?"

I could not answer. I wanted to get [illegible] from the woman I loved, but her soulful eyes were upon me and I knew not how to make the break.

"I will not bother you, Sieur de la Tournay," she said with a rather haughty toss of her pretty head. "It will all be worked out in time. Let us pray it may not be worked out to our own undoing."

She placed her hand on a doorknob as she finished, and, with a slight but graceful bow, left me alone.

Darkness had fairly fallen when I left Surrey House. In parts of the city the cressets had been lighted and the night-bands with their halberds were already on duty. London was always the home of the thief and the robber. Men and women of the highest distinction had been waylaid and plundered and the watch had been unable to break up the villainy. I turned at length into Cheapside, which was better lighted than adjacent streets, and was suddenly stopped by a concourse of people on the narrow pave.

"Long live Essex!" the mob was shouting at the top of its brazen lungs. "Down with the Scottish pretender! We want the head of Mary Stuart!"

The cries sank like balls of fire into my soul. Every ounce of Tournay blood seemed to hiss through my veins. I was jostled by rags and silks, hustled from one side of the pave to the other, stared at while the cries for Mary's blood were spat into my heated face. Presently I saw the van of a procession heralded by a company of armored horsemen and revealed by hundreds of flaring flambeaux.

"What is all this?" thought I, and the next moment I was answered.

The Earl of Essex with his gorgeous retinue was going to the palace.

I stepped back that I might not be so observed and prepared to get a good view of his lordship. A ragged fellow upon whose breath was the odor of poor wine refused to make way for me. His very touch contaminated. I pushed him away, but he came back with the snarl of a hyena.

"Get back, you devil's imp!" I cried, at the same time clutching his shoulder. "Let your betters have a look at the Earl."

"My betters?" he growled, taking on an air of equality. "When did you get better blood than Bob Lightheart's?"

"Oh, your blood is water," I returned, feeling the insult in the depths of my being. "Get out, I say!"

My hand tightened on his shoulder, and all at once I lifted him above the heads of his companions and pitched his greasy carcass into the street. Instantly there was a terrible uproar. I was besieged and driven to the wall of a house by a mad mob. The very scum of London was reaching for my throat. There was nothing for me but to draw on the spawn, and this I did, thrusting my blade into the very teeth of the savages. My action forced them back. "Take his head! He's for the Scottish wench!" rang out on every side. "He's a MacDonald or a MacGregor in disguise. At him, men!"

I was being hard-pressed again, but at that moment a man of tremendous stature grasped my arm.

"Come with me," said he, "you are under arrest."

My blood tingled. I looked into his face.

"Arrested for what?"

"For high treason to our gracious ruler, Queen Elizabeth!"

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* * *

INTERRUPTION.

Sometimes the spring is jolly, when the birds are singing free,
As eagerly as if they all were paid,
And the little yellow blossoms are as jaunty as can be,
While nature ventures forth on dress parade.
And then, again, the season, about which the poets rhyme,
Will fail your admiration to awake,
When it impresses you as being nothing but a time
When the doctor comes and tells you what to take.

The quiver of the branches as the breeze goes drifting by
Where the willows bend above the waters' gleam
Seems to offer a caress, as poor old winter's passing sign,
Is mingled with the murmuring of the stream.
But your joyous observations unrestrained cannot proceed.
You discover here and there a little ache.
And you find you must postpone your light enthusiastic screed
Till the doctor comes and tells you what to take.

* * *

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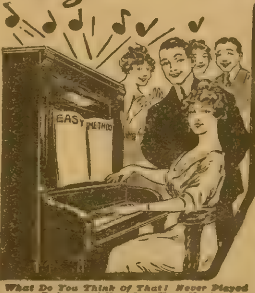

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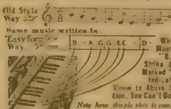

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Just about the time a man succeeds in developing a theory it explodes.

Wise is the man who plays the trump of indifference in the courtship game.

A woman simply has to love something, even if it is nothing but a man.

A remarkable man is one who does a remarkable thing and doesn't talk about it.

The man who makes light of other people's troubles usually swears at his own.

It isn't always safe to judge newspapers, cigars and women by their wrappers.

The more children a woman has the fewer theories she has about raising them.

Think before you act is a good motto, but a lot of people think and then fail to act.

When some men fail to make a hit they try to fix the responsibility on the hammer.

Unless a man who claims to have religion uses it in his business he has the wrong brand.

Every successful man knows more about his own business than he does about other men'

A young man is apt to be an optimist when sowing his wild oats, but he develops pessimism when the harvest begins.

And there are some men who are so conceited they imagine they are the whole parade every time they go for a walk.

And many a girl who thinks she is marrying a man after her own heart discovers later that he was only after her money.

No man knows the day or the hour when one of his old love letters will turn up and take a fall out of his happiness.

HOME AND HEALTH

Fashion Notes.

Cotton dresses will be trimmed with cluny, valenciennes and filet laces.

When coat collars are high they are usually made so they will turn down.

More marked and simple lines will be the important points of the new frocks.

Both wide and narrow girdles are correct, and ribbon belts have come back again.

A good blouse is of black chiffon over white, with corselet, belt and cuffs of white satin.

Tilted to one side, atop of elaborately piled and curled coiffures, are the fashionable tiny hats

Lots of embroideries are going to be used now that the flounced and full skirted dresses have come in.

One of the best evening costumes a woman can have is the black net, over white satin and taffeta foundations.

The newest type of belt buckle is in the form of a sash fastener. It comes in the guise of a brooch, exaggerated in size, but of fairy lightness. The ribbon of the latest girdle is first held in place by this pin, and then the ends are drawn through the ornamental part of the brooch, which is shaped like a buckle.

Very charming are some of the fichus in fine lace, both point and duchesse. These are simple, as all of the fine laces should be, to show the work and design, and most graceful in shape. Some of the shorter fichus are unbecoming, giving the wearers a short, broad appearance. These longer ones are delightful. They have a point in the back reaching a little below the middle of the waist, and the ends in front are long and slender, falling well below the waistline. There is a scant ruffle edging the fichu.

An attractive whim of fashion is in regard to the very narrow but very nice laces threaded with ribbon. Ribbon, very narrow, is run through the edge of the lace, just as one threads one's underwear with ribbon, and lace is used for the trimming of an evening gown, or a day dress. It seems to make very little difference how this threaded lace is used, for upon one evening bodice there was a little lace around the low neck, and through this lace there was threaded a very narrow black velvet ribbon. Upon another a little lace, drawn full of ribbons, was used for a yoke.

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Recipes.

VEAL STEW—Cut two pounds veal into small pieces, add three pints water, one sliced onion, salt and pepper and let boil one hour; then add sliced tomato and put in dumplings. Remove dumplings and meat, add a little butter to broth, thicken a little with flour and pour over meat.

INDIAN SURPRISE—Four slices of bread buttered. Butter your pudding dish and lay the bread in, then beat together one-third of a cup of sugar, one egg, four tablespoons of molasses and three cups of milk and pour over the buttered bread. Let it stand about an hour, or perhaps less would do, then bake in a slow oven for about an hour and a half. You can scarcely tell this from an Indian pudding, and it is less trouble to make.

CREAMED DRIED BEEF WITH MACARONI—One-half pound sliced dried beef, one-quarter pound macaroni, four hard cooked eggs cut in rings, two cups milk, four tablespoons butter, four tablespoons flour, salt and paprika to taste.

Break the macaroni into inch lengths, then throw it into boiling salted water, allow to cook for forty minutes, then drain and keep hot. Melt the butter in a casserole, then fry the beef until slightly browned, remove the beef, stir in the flour and cook for eight minutes with milk. Add the seasonings and the beef. Arrange the macaroni on a hot casserole, pour over the beef and garnish with the eggs.

SOUFFLE OF HAM, MACARONI AND CHEESE—Cook three-fourths of a cup of macaroni broken into inch lengths in rapidly boiling salted water until tender; drain and rinse in plenty of cold water. Butter a baking dish and put the macaroni into it, alternating with cold boiled ham chopped fine, using in all about one cup of ham, and sprinkle each layer with grated cheese and bits of butter. Beat two eggs, mix with a generous cup of milk and pour over the macaroni and ham. Let bake in a slow oven until a custard is formed.

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Needlework.

When cutting out the lining of a blouse yoke be sure to cut it the same way of the material as the outside, otherwise it will be unsatisfactory and will not fit.

Using a warm iron when cutting out a garment will do away with pins on tissue paper patterns. Lay the paper on the material and press lightly with the [illegible] iron. The pattern clings to the cloth.

Quite the newest way of making a casing to run ribbon through is by making a wide cat stitch or feather stitch on the outside of the article to be used and through this run the ribbon. It holds as well as the old-fashioned way.

If a glove splits at the thumb or near a seam a sure and permanent way to repair it is to buttonhole the kid on either side of the split, then sew the buttonholed edges together. The result will be a new, firm seam that will never tear again. When buttonholing be sure to take a good hold of the kid, otherwise the stitches will pull out from the kid.

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Health Notes.

Cold water stimulates the membranes of the stomach and hot water soothes them. Sipping either is better than swallowing rapidly, and when the taste of hot water is unpalatable a pinch of salt or a dash of lemon juice will improve it. A pinch of soda with the lemon juice is even better. A rational habit of drinking water will not only improve the health but will preserve it. Water and milk are both very good to keep the kidneys acting well.

The nightly cleaning should be the most important and most thorough of all. If it is properly done all that will be necessary in the morning will be a cold sponge-off. At night, however, all the dust and dirt of the day has settled on the face, besides the cold cream and powder, and it needs a good scrubbing to get it off.

Few people recognize the medicinal value of pure water, and still fewer realize the amount of water required by the body. The internal bath is as important as the external one in the preservation of health. If the busy mother will accustom herself and train her children to the regular drinking of pure water, and plenty of it, the habit will soon become a fixed one, and much good result. A glass of water should be taken immediately upon rising, at least half an hour before breakfast; another at eleven o'clock; another at four, and a final one just before retiring. It is best to establish a regular time, and then keep to it.

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Marry when June roses blow,
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Whoever wed in August be,
Many a change is sure to see.
Marry in September's shine,
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Ted of the Hills

Or, FIGHTING CATTLE THIEVES

By Annie Brownlee Quimby

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CHAPTER IX.

TED hurried along the trail homeward. The sun had gone down behind Lonesome, and twilight was settling over the valley by the time Ted had rounded up the sheep and started them on the trail towards home. The tinkle of the bell on the leader, a quarter of a mile ahead, came faintly back to Ted, as he drove the last bleating yew into the trail.

Captain heard the first faint tinkle of the bell while they were yet far down the trail, and came whining joyously to the door waving his tail so vigorously that he seemed in danger of snapping it off.

"What is it, Captain?" Mrs. Morgan asked, noting the dog's excitement and his soft, pleading eyes upon her face, and guessing the cause. Pausing to listen, she heard the bell faintly in the distance, and then a hoarse bleat from the leader, which was answered all along the line. "It's Ted and the sheep, Captain. Go and meet them," waving her hand down the trail.

The dog needed no further encouragement and with a series of happy yelps, bounded down the trail. Swinging out to let the sheep pass, he waited for Ted, and gamboled and leaped about Dan's heels like a mad thing.

"Hello, Cap, old boy!" Ted cried, "Glad to see me, ain't you?" Captain barked a joyous answer back.

The sheep were shut in the corral and the cow milked and put in the lot behind the cabin. Then Ted took the ax, and spent a strenuous ten minutes at the woodpile. When the box by the kitchen stove was heaped high, he took off his hat and brushed the dust from his clothes. Filling a basin with water, he took it to the steps at the kitchen door and scrubbed his hands and face thoroughly; and was then ready to do justice to the generous supper provided for him.

While the meal was progressing, Mrs. Morgan listened interestedly to the boy's recital of the day's doings.

"I fear Pete has undertaken a very dangerous and difficult task. I hope no harm will befall him," she observed anxiously. "I fear those rustlers are a very desperate set of men. It would probably mean death to Pete were he discovered."

"Don't you worry about Pete, mother. He is too shrewd to fall into their hands. Why, Pete is considered the best trailer and cleverest horseman and cowboy in Humboldt County. They will have to go some if they get him. His Indian cunning will save him."

"I hope so, son. I should hate to see ill befall him while trying to serve us."

"But say, mother, I've got to get that big chestnut. Gee! He is a picture, sure!"

"You must be very careful, Ted. He may be a vicious brute. Having run wild so long, he won't submit to control without a terrible struggle. I wish you'd give up the idea," she said anxiously.

"I'll be as safe as a toad in the puddle, so don't give it a second thought." Ted said reassuringly. "Besides, he is not so wild as you seem to think, and I've just got to have him." Ted answered, his eyes glowing with excitement. "Holy smoke! Won't he make a swell saddle horse, though? There'll be nothing like him around here." His enthusiasm was so sincere that the mother smiled in sympathy.

"But how are you going to manage it, Ted?" she asked, looking puzzled.

Ted then described the beautiful little glade on the other side of Lonesome Ridge, and its natural advantages for forming a rude corral. "I can throw up a thick brush fence around three sides of it in half a day. Then I'll entice Topsy in, and he is sure to follow; then I'll close up the other end. It's the only way I know to get Topsy back, and Silver really needs her. She is more to him than a mere pony—she's his companion and chum."

"I suppose he will miss her terribly? What a strange old man he must be to isolate himself as he does. I wish you could persuade him to visit us, Ted?"

"It's no use, mother. I've tried it many times," and the boy shook his head sadly. "The mere suggestion seems to frighten him pitifully. He seems happiest when left alone."

"Have you any idea how he manages to live?" Mrs. Morgan asked.

"He hunts and fishes a little—enough for his own use, but he always has plenty of food, and the best kind of food too; and his cabin is like something you read of in books. He must have money, or he couldn't have all these beautiful, expensive things. He has shelves upon shelves of books—there must be hundreds of them. I didn't think there were so many books in the world until I saw Silver's," Ted said. "I wish you could see them, mother."

"I have a good idea what they are like son," she said with a sigh. "In my father's home we had a beautiful library. There were shelves from floor to ceiling, all filled with beautiful volumes. There must have been thousands of them," and her voice quivered ever so little, and the eyelashes veiled eyes to which remembrance had brought tears.

"Don't mother," Ted said, placing an arm about her shoulder.

"No, I won't, son. I thought never to do that again, but you see human nature is weak," and she resolutely wiped away the tears. "I have often wondered what your strange old friend's real name is?"

"I don't know, mother. I asked him once, but he said he had left his name with his past, and I was to call him Silver. They christened him that up here on account of his white hair and beard."

"He must have had some terrible trouble in the past, and have come up into the hills to hide it and live out his life in peace."

"He has had some great sorrow, I know. He spoke about it today; but somehow he speaks of things I don't understand. You would know what he meant, mother."

Ted soon grew drowsy, and, kissing his mother good night, took a small oil lamp and ascended the ladder in the corner of the kitchen to his bed in the loft.

The following morning Ted was at Silver's cabin before seven o'clock. The early morning air was exhilarating, and the boy's heart was filled with the joy of living. The dew lay on the trees and foliage, like exquisite pearl drops thrown broadcast by a lavish hand. On the trail up Lonesome the fern-like leaves of the mountain ash shimmered, dew-drenched, in the early morning sun, and aflame with great clusters of scarlet berries. A squirrel barked hoarsely and scudded across the trail, as though inviting pursuit, but Captain was not along, and the little furry fellow disappointed in the chase, perched on the limb of a scrub pine and chattered defiance and disgust at Ted. A blackbird flew along the trail crying: "T'cheek, t'chee!" A blue jay, perched saucily on a limb, looked inquisitively at him, then flew away protestingly.

"Was there ever such a morning?" Ted thought. "All the feathered folks are out and enjoying themselves." Just then a crow perched on a limb over the trail, and cried: "Caw, caw!" his little, black, beady eyes fastened upon Ted.

"Chatter away, old fellow," Ted cried "I haven't time to talk to you. I have important work to do today. So go along, you old black rascal."

"Caw! caw! caw!" the crow cried derisively, and spreading his great black wings, flew away through the woods.

When Ted reached Silver's cabin the old man had just finished breakfast, and was childishly eager to begin working out their plan. Before leaving for the glade Silver slipped a couple of lumps of sugar in his coat pocket.

"This sugar may be useful in coaxing Topsy into the glade," he explained.

Ted insisted that the old man ride Dan to the glade. When they reached the scene of their adventure of the day before there was no sign of any horses about. Leaving Silver in the glade, Ted sprang astride of Dan and rode up over the hill on the other side of the glade, where he could get a good view of the gulch on the other side and the slope of the hill beyond. At first he could distinguish nothing; then, as his eye began to separate the different objects, he caught a glimpse of the chestnut's cream mane, waving gracefully in the morning breeze. The boy's heart leaped with joy. He was secretly afraid they might have wandered far during the night. "They are resting, I guess. I'll just steal around and see if Topsy is all right, just to please Silver." Making a detour around the rim of the hill he came out

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THE PLAPAO-PAD EXPLAINED

The principle upon which the Plapao-Pad works can be easily figured out by noting the accompanying illustration, and reading the following explanation

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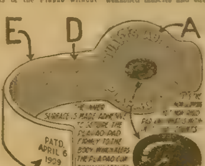

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F
B
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just behind the spot where the stallion was standing. Topsy lay close to the chestnut, her black coat shining in the sun and her head resting on her side. Scattered about were a dozen other ponies, some lying and others standing with heads drooped and eyes closed. Ted had crept up quietly, and the horses were unaware of his presence; but, as luck would have it, he was again on the windward side, and the breeze carried the scent direct to the watchful old pirate below, who at once threw up his head and showed signs of uneasiness. He turned, with nose in the air, and scanned the hillside, but Ted had reined Dan in behind a clump of bushes where they were screened from view. Whether it was the presence of other horses or pure willfulness he could not quite determine, but Dan began to prance stubbornly, angrily champing the bit. The stamping, and the cracking of dry twigs, alarmed the horses. The stallion threw up his head with a snort of alarm, and, with tail waving like a flag trotted off down the hill towards the glade. Topsy was close behind, with the others following.

As the big chestnut came trotting down the hill into the open glade with the black pony at his side, Silver laughed for pure joy and drew a lump of sugar from his pocket. When the little pony saw Silver with the sugar, she trotted up to him quite naturally, and held out her nose to receive the dainty. He grasped her by the bridle and patted her sleek, glossy neck.

"I've a good mind to keep you now, old girl," he cried, caressing her inquisitive nose that was searching for more sugar in his pocket. "If I let you go I may never get you back again." The love and yearning in the old man's voice touched Ted deeply.

"You'll get her back again, Silver, never fear. Why she'd come to you any time."

"Looks like it, don't it, boy?" the old man replied, pleased with the idea.

The big stallion stood in the center of the glade, blowing viciously through his nose, and his head going up and down like a mechanical toy. He varied the performance by trotting up and down the glade, with head high and tail erect and his long, white mane flowing in the breeze.

CHAPTER X.

BY THE time the sun began to lean towards the west, Ted had thre sides of the tiny glade enclosed in a brush fence that the stallion would find hard to penetrate. Trees felled lengthwise, with limbs and brush heaped high, provided a formidable barrier, even on the level ground, but when built on a sloping hillside it was impregnable.

Ted found the horses feeding on the side of a steep hill, and by a little maneuvering managed to head them for the glade. For some reason or other, the stallion preferred not to enter the enclosure, and trotted around to one side, with Topsy and the other following. This was repeated twice and Ted began to fear the big fellow would prove troublesome. The next time he brought them around to the gap Silver stood just inside with a lump of sugar extended to entice Topsy.

The old man made a striking picture as he stood there with his white hair and whiskers against the green background.

The bait proved effective and Topsy came trotting up for the tempting morsel. The chestnut slackened his pace, snorting his disgust and anger, and glared over the barricade at Topsy. Silver grasped Topsy by the bridle and led her further into the glade. Ted circled about and got on the other side of the cunning old outlaw, and, keeping between him and the rest of the band, he brought him up to the gap. Topsy looked back and whinnied an invitation, and the gallant old courtier answered, and trotted in through the gap, and down the glade to meet her.

Silver removed the bridle and Topsy began munching grass.

Ted fell to with the ax and soon had the gap closed. By two o'clock they were back at Silver's cabin and Ted took the old trail across the hills to Morgan's ranch. He was anxious to hear if Pete had learned anything about the steers, and to get help to catch and subdue the stallion on the morrow. The three mile ride was accomplished in a short time, for Ted was aglow with anticipation and hope.

Edward Morgan was standing in the [illegible] when Ted rode up.

"Hello, Ted!" he called. "I was just wondering if you'd be over today."

"What's the news?" Ted asked, eagerly. "Has Pete got back yet?"

"Yes, Pete's back, but he had no luck about them steers. He trailed them several miles into the hills and then lost them among a confusion of tracks. They were divided and taken in two lots, and he thinks they are hidden in some little ravine in the hills."

"I didn't expect he would find them. They had too long a start, and the tracks were old."

"We are going to find them, though. We are getting up a search party to scour the hills. Those rustlers have got to be hunted down, or else we may as well leave the range. We do the work and they reap the benefit. We may as well fight it out now as any other time. I've some pretty ugly suspicions about these rustlers," he said frowning.

"I have thought some nasty things too," Ted said. "But I don't know as there is anything in it."

"How does your mother take the loss of the steers?" the uncle asked.

"Mother was just splendid!" Ted cried. "I hated to tell her, at first. You know, we'd planned for so long what we were going to do with the price of them steers. But mother was real plucky about it. She said: 'If they needed them worse than we did, they were welcome to them,'" Ted said proudly.

"That's just like your mother, Ted. The pluckiest little woman I ever knew," the uncle said, earnestly. "But she'll get them steers back, or we'll know the reason why," with a glint in his blue eyes that boded ill for some one. "Every man on the ranch is determined that when they steal from widows and orphans they have gone a little too far. The whole country will help us to run them down, but we will have to do it quietly, or some one may put them wise to what's going on."

While he was speaking a woman in a cook's apron came carelessly out of the kitchen door and paused within earshot, as though to get a little fresh air.

"You forget, uncle, that I am rather an old orphan. Why I'm eighteen, and old enough to look out for myself and mother, too," Ted said, amused, and a little hurt.

"Yes, I know, but it was only the other day that you were a little shaver huntin' birds' nests or making mud cakes. Just before we laid your father on the hillside there I promised him I'd kind-a look after you and your mother. Your mother has been too proud to let me help her, but I can see to it that others don't rob her."

"You know, uncle, that we have never really needed help. If we had, mother would have accepted it from you, I'm sure."

"Well, she can't prevent my doing this thing for her; and at the same time we will be doing a good thing for ourselves and the country."

"Did you ever hear of wild horses in the hills here, Uncle Edward?" Ted asked, suddenly remembering what he came for.

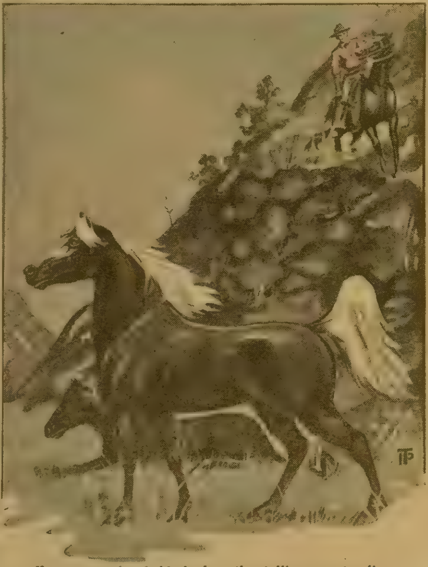
"Yes, there's a band of wild horses around somewhere. I ran across them a couple of times. They are not exactly wild horses, though. They are simply strays, for I know several mares in the bunch."

"The leader is a big chestnut stallion with cream mane and tail, isn't he?"

"Exactly! Have you seen them?" Morgan cried, becoming interested at once.

"Yes, and that old chestnut got Silver's black mare away."

"The old pirate! I tried to shoot him once, but missed. That old rascal knows



He came out just behind where the stallion was standing.

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as much as a man, and a lot more about some things."

"I'm mighty glad you didn't get him that time, uncle. I want him for a saddle horse. Won't he make a dandy?"

"You've got to get him first," Morgan laughed. "I know a couple of fellows that tried to rope him, but he dodges every time."

"Well, I didn't try to rope him, but I've got him corralled," with a show of careless pride, which he could not quite hide.

"You've got him corralled?" Morgan cried in amazement. "How the devil did you do it, kid?"

"Oh! That was easy enough. I just built three sides of a corral, and drove him in, and closed up the other side; that's all."

Then he explained what he had done, and how he had done it.

"Ah! I see now," the uncle cried. "That little black mare explains it. You'd never have trapped him if you hadn't used her as a decoy."

"I know it," Ted answered. "I thought perhaps you'd let Pete help me rope him tomorrow, and break him to the saddle? I don't believe he'll be hard to break, once we get the saddle on him."

"Sure, Pete will help you, and Sam is in off the range just now; he can go along, too; and darned if I won't go myself. It will be great sport to see that old pirate in harness. Why, Ted, you'll have the finest horse in the whole country, if you can really break him to the saddle," he cried enthusiastically.

"I know it," Ted answered quietly. "That's why I've set my heart on having him."

"Come in and have a cup of coffee with me, Ted," Aunt Margaret called from the doorway.

Mrs. Morgan was pouring coffee in her cosy little sitting-room when Ted and her husband joined her.

"Just sit here by me, Ted, and tell me about your mother. She seems to have deserted us lately!"

"This is mother's busy time, you know, Aunt Margaret. But I dare say she will find time to come over soon."

"How is the woods harvest coming along?" Aunt Margaret asked.

"The best yet, I believe. Mother will be rich first thing she knows. You know this is the year she gathers that wild ginseng, and there seems to be more of it than she expected."

"I am glad of that, Ted, for she has been untiring in patience and care of that stuff, and deserves a rich harvest. I rode over the other day, but there was no one at home."

"Mother is in the woods from early morning till late in the afternoon, and I have been away almost every day, too. Mother will be sorry to have missed you, Aunt Margaret. You must come again soon."

"Sure, Ted. I'll run over almost any time," she replied lightly.

"Well, I must be getting along," Ted said, rising from the table, "or dark will overtake me on the trail."

"I have a little parcel here for your mother. I wish you'd take it along, Ted."

"All right, Aunt Margaret, I'll take it."

"It's only a trifle. I happened to remember that your mother's birthday is due in a few days, so I made her a little present. I know she has no time for such nonsense herself," handing the parcel over to Ted.

"Thanks, auntie! It's kind of you to remember mother. I've got a little present hid in the barn for her. You remember that silk dress she admired so much on Miss Cummings when she was here last year? I sent to Eureka by the storekeeper from the corners and got her one just like it."

"Ted, you're a darling!" Aunt Margaret cried, standing on tiptoe to kiss the sunburned cheek. "I don't begrudge you to your mother, Ted, but I wish I had a boy like you," and her voice was a trifle husky.

Ted knew she was thinking of a certain little boy with blue eyes and long golden curls that had been laid in his grave so many years ago. The wound in the mother's heart had never quite healed and the scar would ache sometimes.

"Never mind, Aunt Margaret, I'll always be your boy after mother," he said brightly.

Edward Morgan walked to the window and was gazing out across the valley to the hills beyond, where thousands of his cattle ranged. Thoughts of his own little boy, who left them so many years ago, were always keenest when Ted was with him.

Standing just outside the door apparently enjoying a breath of fresh air, was the new cook, her big, muscular hands resting on her fat hips, and her bronzed face showing contact with the sun and wind, rather than the kitchen range. Her blue calico dress was several inches too short, and exposed a pair of very masculine-looking feet, wearing at least a number seven shoe. Her thick gray hair was gathered in a touseled knot at the back of her head, and held there by gaudy-looking hairpins.

"Where did you get the new cook?" Ted asked, a little curiously, watching the awkward-looking form in the blue calico.

"She is a friend of the Mullens, and when our old cook left suddenly she applied for the place. Isn't she an odd-looking person?"

"Very odd-looking, Aunt Margaret," Ted said, smiling. "She reminds me of a picture I saw in the movies in Eureka, that time we went down with the cattle. It was of a man masquerading in woman's togs. Gee! It was a scream," and he laughed heartily at the recollection, and Aunt Margaret laughed in sympathy.

Ted's remarks caused Morgan to look more closely at the new cook. Under his keen scrutiny, and feeling herself the subject of discussion, the new cook moved with a peculiar, rolling gait into her own domains in the kitchen, and peered cautiously through the window. Morgan watched her disappear through the door and a peculiar light gleamed in his steely eyes.

"Do you find Maria a good cook, Margaret?" Mr. Morgan asked his wife.

"Well, no. I'm beginning to think she is not nearly so good as recommended. She can boil potatoes and fry bacon and bake beans and make coffee and that seems about all she can do, and do well. You know what the bread is like, Edward?"

Ted untied Dan and sprang into the saddle.

"Pete and Sam will be over in the morning, then?" Ted called over his shoulder, as he turned towards the road.

"Yes, they'll be there soon after sunup," was the reply.

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* * *

CLEANING UP.

The dust is out of rugs and drapes
And curtains—not a thing escapes;
It's wiped from table, shelf and chair
And scattered broadcast in the air.

The smell of soap is prevalent
And winter clothes away are sent;
The home is cheerless; mother feels
No interest in getting meals.

Now father's brought the screens upstairs
To paint them and to make repairs;
He has an air of lassitude,
Save that in speech he's somewhat rude.

Helen, in fear of sultry days,
Has awning up to shut the rays
Of sunlight out, and now her room
Is filled with an unearthly gloom.

Now brother Tom has felt the call
To clean things, so he'll overhaul
His cabinet of snakes—for years
The source of mother's wildest fears.

And even Sue, that languid maid,
Has been compelled to lend her aid;
She's rendered service, goodness knows,
By burning pictures of her beaux!

* * *

All There.

A little girl traveling in a sleeping car with her parents greatly objected to being put in an upper berth. She was assured that papa, mamma and God would watch over her. She was settled in the berth at last and the passengers were quiet for the night, when a small voice piped:

"Mamma!"

"Yes, dear."

"You there?"

"Yes, I'm here. Now go to sleep."

"Papa, you there?"

"Yes, I'm here. Go to sleep, like a good girl."

This continued at intervals for some time, until a fellow passenger lost patience and called:

"We're all here! Your father, and mother, and brothers, and sisters, and uncles, and aunts, and first cousins! All here! Now go to sleep!"

There was a brief pause after this explosion. Then the tiny voice piped up again, but very softly.

"Mamma!"

"Well?"

"Was that God?"

* * *

"As a Rule---"

Her father is a florist. One day she bobbed out on the boulevard with a bunch of violets emblazoning the lapel of her nifty coat.

"Some lucky girl, I'll say," her envious female friend remarked. "When violets cost the most you wear the most. Lucky you are, I say, to have a daddy that's a florist."

The florist's daughter glanced down at her cluster of violets, then sighed and lamented:

"Gee, but I wish he had a candy shop instead."

And thus it goes—"as a rule woman's a fool, when it's hot she wants it cool; when it's cool she wants it hot, always wanting what is not," or something like that.

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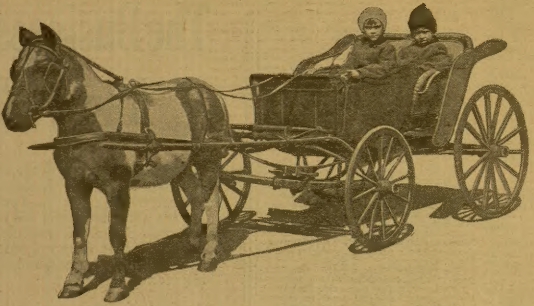

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Send your name and address on the coupon below and we will send you a prize for answering this advertisement and give you a Certificate of Entry in our Pony Contest and give you 2,000 FREE VOTES toward winning "Pal" and Outfit. There are no losers—everyone gets a prize for everything they do and you are not limited to one prize alone, for you can get many easily, besides having an equal chance at winning the grand prize.

Liberal Rewards to All

Without doubt this is the most liberal contest ever announced and it is so arranged that whether you win "Pal" and Outfit or not, if you take part in the contest and start off NOW with the 2,000 FREE VOTES we give you, we guarantee you will be richly rewarded for everything little or big that you do. REMEMBER—you get the extra rewards right away. There is no waiting or delaying until the end of the contest to get your special prizes and cash rewards. You have no idea of the magnificent presents and the handsome cash rewards we give you. Just as soon as we receive the coupon properly filled out we will write you by return mail and tell you all about our simple, easy plan whereby you can get anything at all you have ever wished for in return for a little effort on your part in our behalf. In case of a tie in the contest for the grand prize the persons so tied will each be given a Shetland Pony and Outfit as described.

Golden Treasures Await You Almost for the Asking

Up here in our big building we have boxes and boxes of golden treasures that are yours almost for the asking. During the contest we will give away hundreds of dollars' worth of bicycles, watches, bracelets, cameras, rings, purses, vanity cases, and many, many other prizes too numerous to mention. Our plan is so simple and easy that it seems more like a dream than a reality. You simply can't realize what wonderful things we can do for you. Sign and mail the coupon now, before you turn this page.

Don't Wait—Don't Delay
Mail This Coupon Today →

Don't delay another minute but write your name and address on the coupon and mail it to **us at once.** It is dangerous to delay—hesitation pays no dividends. You can't expect to win "Pal" and Outfit and the many other fine presents unless you make the start. Make the start NOW by signing and mailing the coupon before you lay down this paper. The quicker you mail the coupon the better your chances will be for winning. Mail the coupon RIGHT AWAY. Address,

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY
Pony Contest Editor, Dept. L
500-514 North Dearborn Street, CHICAGO

Good For 2,000 Votes

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY
Pony Contest Editor, Dept, L
500-514 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—Please tell me how I can become the owner of "Pal" and entire outfit. Also send me my Certificate of Entry and 2,000 FREE VOTES and tell me how I can get 500 more FREE VOTES. Let me know, also, how to earn cash commissions and the many splendid presents.

My name is..

R. F. D..............Box or Street No.......................................

Town.. State..........................

My Father's or Mother's Name is...

The LEDGER'S EMBROIDERY CORNER.

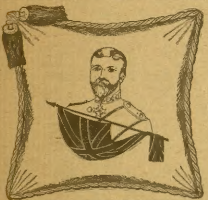
We call the attention of every woman to the beauty of the patterns displayed from week to week, and wish to impress upon each one the splendid quality of material that makes our offer a great bargain in every case. Every offer is complete. You can finish it up without buying anything extra.

These designs are already stamped on best quality cloth, and every set comes to you complete, exactly as described.

You are sure to find many articles that you want if you watch the Ledger each week, and it is so easy to get them, every woman should have little trouble in getting almost every one.

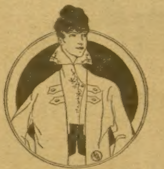
Every one of the designs we are going to offer is new and up-to-date, and nowhere else can you secure the same, as they are made exclusively for us.

Canada—Single subscriptions, $1.50; Blade and Ledger, $3.00 the year.



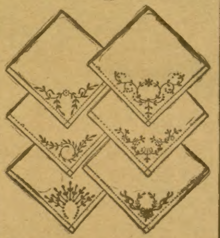
No. 5001, Photo Pillow Top.

NO. 5001, PHOTO PILLOW TOP.—Photo pillow tops of the principal leaders in the European strife. The designs are exact reproductions taken from recent photographs; the flags of their respective countries are draped artistically beneath the portraits in their natural colors to be embroidered. The design is stamped on tan art ticking, 21x21 inches, and includes the back and six skeins of colored floss. You can have your choice of pillows with the portrait of any of the following: King George, England; King Albert, Belgium; Emperor William, Germany; President Poincare, France; Czar Nicholas, Russia; Emperor Franz Joseph, Austria; King Peter, Servia; King Victor Emmanuel, Italy. Will be sent with a year's subscription to either the Blade or the Ledger for $1.00.



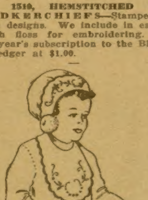
No. 4096, Chemisette.

NO. 4096, CHEMISETTE.—This very charming design is stamped on a fine quality of white organdie. We also include four skeins of cotton floss. Sent free and prepaid with a year's subscription, new or renewal, to the Blade and Ledger at $2.00.



No. 1510, Hemstitched Lawn Handkerchiefs.

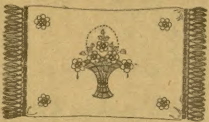
NO. 1510, HEMSTITCHED LAWN HANDKERCHIEFS—Stamped with simple designs. We include in each set enough floss for embroidering. Sent for a year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger at $1.00.



No. 4070, Baby Cap and Bib.

NO. 4070, BABY CAP AND BIB—This baby cap and bib will look very sweet when put on your baby. The material is real white Irish linen and the designs are not too heavy, but are just right for that little one in your home. Four skeins of mercerized cotton floss are included for embroidering the design. Given for a year's subsciption to the Blade and the Ledger at $2.00.

NO. 4097, PILLOW TOP—The above illustration gives you an idea of this beautiful pillow top. This is a brand new design that you have never seen before. The design is stamped on tan art ticking, 17x21 inches. This offer includes also the back. This pillow top is tinted in just the right shade and we send you six skeins of mercerized cotton floss to go with it. Sent with a year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger at $1.00.



No. 4097, Pillow Top.

* * *

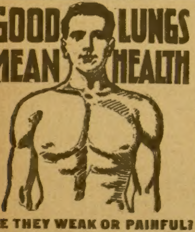
Burning the Notes.

"Dear Harold," with sadness she wrote to her former fiance, "as you are probable aware, I am to be married to Mr. Anthony the coming month. I shall, therefore, appreciate it if you will burn all the little notes I sent you, assuring you of reciprocity in regard to those you sent me."

She immediately received this reply: "Dear Dorothy: I shall certainly comply with your request at once. And incidentally, as your new fiance holds a few notes of mine, I shall deem it a great favor if you will induce him to burn them with the rest."

SAVE 50% Order A RAINCOAT By Mail
Send for catalog. We produce the best raincoats in America for the money and sell them only through the mail. Thousands of people purchase our Raincoats. Unqualified guarantee. Money back if not absolutely satisfactory.
TRENT RAINCOAT CO., Dept. B, TRENTON, N. J.

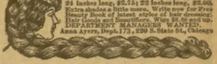
One Man One Team CLEAR $20 A DAY
Have Your Own Business — Be Your Own Master
You will find a steady, profitable business with POWERS COMBINED WELL-BORING AND DRILLING MACHINE
You alone, with one team, can transport and operate it anywhere. Bores through any kind of soil and drills through rock. Bores 100 foot well in 10 hours. Sold on easy payments. Demand for wells is steadily increasing. Write for catalog and our Liberal Terms. Address
LISLE MFG. CO., Box 817, Clarinda, Ia.



GOOD LUNGS MEAN HEALTH
ARE THEY WEAK OR PAINFUL?
Do your lungs ever bleed?
Do you have night sweats?
Have you pains in the chest and sides?
Do you spit yellow and black matter?
Are you continually hawking and coughing?
Do you have pains under your shoulder blades?
These are Regarded Symptoms of
LUNG TROUBLE
You should take immediate steps to check the progress of these symptoms. The longer you allow them to advance and develop, the more deep seateda nd serious your condition becomes.
We Stand Ready to Prove to You absolutely, that Lung Germine, the German Treatment, has cured completely and permanently case after case of Tuberculosis, Chronic Bronchitis, Catarrh of the Lungs, Catarrh of the Bronchial Tubes and other lung troubles. Many sufferers who had lost all hope and who had been given up by physicians have been permanently cured by Lung Germine. If your lungs are merely weak and the disease has not yet manifested itself, you can prevent its development, you can build up your lungs and system to their normal strength and capacity. Lung Germine has cured advanced Tuberculosis, and the patients remain strong and in splendid health today.
Let us send you the Proof—Proof that will Convince any Judge or Jury on Earth
We will gladly send you the proof of many remarkable cures, also a FREE TRIAL of Lung Germine together with our new 40-page book (in colors) on the treatment and care of tuberculosis and lung trouble.
JUST SEND YOUR NAME
LUNG GERMINE CO., 301 RAE BLK., JACKSON, MICH.

Cal-o-cide
USED BY MILLIONS
For all Foot Troubles

Instant Relief For Aching, Burning and Sweaty Feet; Corns, Callouses; Bunions, use two spoonfuls of Cal-ocide in foot bath. Package 25c. at any drug store.



Anna Ayers Trusts You 10 Days
NO MONEY IN ADVANCE. Send lock of hair and I will mail on approval, a short stem, full weight, wavy or straight, fine human hair switch to match. Pay in ten days, or return, or sell three switches and get your own FREE. State length desired. Special bargains.
20 inches long, $1.50; 27 inches long, $5.00; 24 inches long, $2.75; 22 inches long, $2.00. Extra shades a little more. Write now for Free Beauty Book of latest styles of hair dressing, Hair Goods and Beautifiers. Wigs $8.00 and up. DEPARTMENT MANAGERS WANTED.
Anna Ayers, Dept. 173, 220 S. State St., Chicago

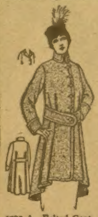
BOY SCOUT Field Glass, Telescope, Compass, combined, given. Sell 10 bottles perfume, 10c each. A. ANDERSON, 51 Carlton, Grand Rapids, Mich.

PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

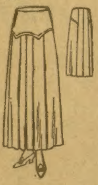
Hundreds of Patterns to Select From

The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

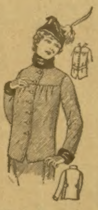
We have a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. **Read our splendid offer below.**



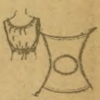
8523-A Belted Coat, 34 to 42 bust.



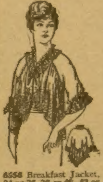
8593 Plaited Skirt with Yoke, 24 to 32 waist.



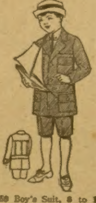
8563 Coat with Yoke for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



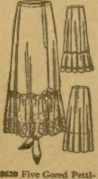
8588-A One-Piece Corset Cover, Small 34 or 36, Medium 38 or 40, Large 42 or 44 bvst.



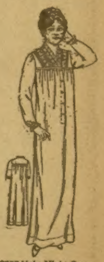
8558 Breakfast Jacket, 34 or 36, 38 or 40, 42 or 44 bust.



8550 Boy's Suit, 8 to 14 years.



8620 Five Gored Petticoat, 24 to 34 waist.



8577 Yoke Night Gown, Small 34 or 36, Medium 38 or 40, Large 42 or 44 bust.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it. To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

.... CUT THIS OUT AND SEND TO US ....

THE CHICAGO LEDGER, 500 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Enclosed please find one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. This entitles me to Five Pattern Coupons. Canada Subscription Price $1.50 per year.

NAME..

Street No.
or R. F. D...

Box............Town...

This is a..........................Subscription. State..........................
(New or Renewal)

If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number.) Coupons good for six months.

Storyettes

An Apt Pupil.

During a visit to London, Mascagni, the celebrated composer, was seated at his hotel window one day, when a street organ stopped and proceeded to grind out his famous intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana." The organ grinder turned the handle in a rather jerky way, and the result was that the tune came forth in spasms.

At length, unable to bear it any longer, Mascagni rushed bareheaded from the hotel and reproached the man for playing the intermezzo so badly.

"I," he said, "am Mascagni; I am the composer. And I shall myself show you how to play it."

He solemnly turned the handle, so that the organ grinder might notice the correct time. The man thanked him, and the composer went back to his hotel.

The next morning the same organ grinder approached and again took up his stand outside the hotel. As Mascagni was leaving, a few minutes later, he noticed a crowd collected round the street organ. He paused a moment to see what they were looking at, and found that the organ grinder had decorated his instrument with a notice reading: "Pupil of Mascagni!"

❧

Compensation.

A New Yorker tells of a young Irish couple in his employ, not long from the "ould counthry." Shortly after their arrival, the young wife, ambitious for learning, entered a night school, since her duties permitted of that.

One evening, when she returned to the servants' hall from school, the husband asked:

"An' phwat are ye learnin' now, Molly?"

"Tonight," said Molly, thinking to have a bit of fun with Malachi, "tonight the teacher read to us about the laws of compensation."

"Compensation? What's that?"

"It's hard to explain, but it's something like this: If your sense of smell is poor, the sense of taste is all the sharper; and if you are blind, you can hear all the better."

Malachi reflected. "Sure," said he, "I see. It's loike this: For example, if a man is born wid wan leg shorter than the other, the other is longer."

❧

Very Bashful.

Mattie was recently employed by a Boston matron. As might be expected, she has many admirers—so many, her mistress asserts, that the kitchen is seldom without some male aspirant for her hand.

On one occasion the mistress of the house, who, though she thoroughly disapproves of her cook's extensive calling list, hesitates to make too strong her objections, lest she thereby lose the valuable girl's services, referred to the advent of a new admirer.

"Why is it, Mattie, that your latest caller keeps such a deathly silence with you when he calls?"

The girl grinned broadly.

"Oh, ma'am,' said she, "as yet the poor feller is that bashful he does nothin' but ate!"

❧

Not at All Strange.

A well-known Western Senator recently visited a barber shop where the barber, failing to recognize his patron, was very talkative.

He ventured on all the timely topics of the day, and although the Senator did not, apparently, enter into the spirit of the conversation very keenly, the tonsorial artist's enthusiasm was not visibly dampened.

Finally he asked:

"Have you ever been in here before?"

"Once," said the Senator.

"Strange that I don't recall your face."

"Not at all," the Senator assured him. "It altered greatly in healing."

❧

A Fish Story.

The late Justice Brewer was with a party of New York friends on a fishing trip in the Adirondacks, and around the campfire one evening the talk naturally ran on big fish. When it came his turn the jurist began, uncertain as to how he was going to come out:

"We were fishing one time on the Grand Banks for—er—er—for——"

"Whales," somebody suggested.

"No," said the Justice, "we were baiting with whales."

❧

Not Equal to It.

"Are you going to the Wallerby reception tonight?"

"No? the Twobbles will be there, so I declined my invitation."

"Why do you object to the presence of 'the Twobbles?"

"I don't object to their presence particularly, but I have already heard them tell the story of their escape from Berlin ten or twelve times, and I don't feel equal to another recital."

LET US MAKE YOU FAT

50-Cent Box Free!

We Want to Prove at Our Own Expense That It Is No Longer Necessary to Be Thin, Scrawny and Undeveloped

WE INVITE EVERY THIN MAN AND WOMAN HERE

Every Reader of This Paper Who Is Run Down, Nervous or Underweight, to Get Fat at Our Expense

"Gee! Look at that pair of skinny scarecrows! Why don't they try Sargol?"

This is a generous offer to every thin man or woman reader. We positively guarantee to increase your weight to your own satisfaction or no pay. Think this over—think what it means. At our own risk, we offer to put 10, 15, yes, 30 pounds of good, solid, "stay there" flesh on your bones, to fill out hollows in cheeks, neck or bust, to get rid of that "peaked" look, to rejuvenate and revitalize your whole body until it tingles with vibrant energy; to do this without drastic diet "tonics," severe physical culture "stunts," detention from business or any irksome requirements—if we fail it costs you nothing.

We particularly wish to hear from the excessively thin, those who know the humiliation and embarrassment which only skinny people have to suffer in silence. We want to send a free 50-cent package of our new discovery to the people who are called "slats" and "bean poles," to bony women, whose clothes never look "anyhow," no matter how expensively dressed, to the skinny men who fail to gain social or business recognition on account of their starved appearance. We care not whether you have been thin from birth, whether you have lost flesh through sickness, how many flesh builders you have experimented with. We take the risk and assume it cheerfully. If we cannot put pounds and pounds of healthy flesh on your frame we don't want your money.

How can we do this? We will tell you. We have discovered a remarkable concentrated treatment for increasing cell growth, the very substance of which our bodies are made—a treatment to make indigestion and other stomach troubles disappear as if by magic and an old dyspeptic or a sufferer from weak nerves or lack of vitality feel like a 2-year-old. This new treatment which has proved such a boon to thin persons is called **Sargol.** Don't forget the name **"S-A-R-G-O-L."** Nothing like it has ever been produced before. It is a revelation to women who have never been able to appear stylish in anything they wore because of their thinness. It is a godsend to men who are under weight or lacking in nerve force or energy. If you want a beautiful and well-rounded figure of symmetrical proportions of which you can feel justly proud—if you want a body full of throbbing life and energy write The Sargol Company, 100-E Herald Building, Binghamton, N. Y., to-day, and we will send you absolutely free, a 50c box of Sargol to prove all we claim. Take one with every meal, and in five minutes after you take the first concentrated tablet of this precious product see how it commences to unfold its virtues. It has by actual demonstration often increased the weight at the rate of one pound a day. But you say you want proof. Well, here you are. Here is the statement of those who have tried—who have been convinced—and who have testified to the virtues of this marvelous preparation.

What Sargol Has Done for Others

When we mail you the Free 50-cent package of Sargol, we will send you copies of letters received from grateful patrons, reporting actual gains in solid, healthy, permanent flesh, of from ten to over thirty pounds.

We give here a few interesting figures from reports which are being received daily:

REV. GEORGE W. DAVIS says:

"I have made a faithful trial of the Sargol treatment and must say it has brought to me new life and vigor. I have gained twenty pounds and now weigh 170 pounds, and what is better, I have gained the days of my boyhood. It has been the turning point of my life. My health is now fine. I don't have to take any medicine at all and never want to again."

MRS. A. I. RODENHEISER writes:

"I have gained immensely since I took Sargol, for I only weighed about 106 pounds when I began using it and now I weigh 130 pounds, so really this means 24 pounds. I feel stronger and now I carry rosy cheeks, which is something I could never say before.

"My old friends who have been used to seeing me with a thin, long face, say that I am looking better than they have ever seen me before, and father and mother are so well pleased to think I have got to look so well and weigh so heavy for me."

F. GAGNON writes:

"Here is my report since taking the Sargol treatment. I am a man of 67 years of age and was all run down to the very bottom. I had to quit work as I was so weak. I gained 22 pounds with 26 days' treatment. I cannot tell you how happy I feel. All my clothes are getting too tight. My face has a good color and I never was so happy in my life."

C. E. Crouner	reports	gain	15	lbs.	in	30	days
Thomas Davis	"	"	10	"	"	16	"
Leonore Patten	"	"	16	"	"	30	"
Mrs. Seim	"	"	13	"	"	20	"
Mrs. A. Arnott	"	"	10	"	"	40	"
F. A. Myrick	"	"	20	"	"	30	"
Philip Drapeau	"	"	9	"	"	30	"
Mrs. S. E. Murray	"	"	30	"	"	40	"
Mary Bland	"	"	18	"	"	40	"
W. W. Allis	"	"	36	"	"	50	"
Wm. Carmichael	"	"	5	"	"	10	"
Arthur Stewart	"	"	5	"	"	12	"
Mrs. C. Craig	"	"	13	"	"	30	"
Mrs. N. Galliger	"	"	18	"	"	35	"

Send today for our free 50-cent package and let us prove that

Sargol Should Do the Same for You

This treatment is used to increase the red-corpuscles in the blood, strengthen the nerves and put the digestive tract into such shape that your food is assimilated and turned into good, solid, healthy flesh instead of passing through the system indigested and unassimilated. It is a thoroughly scientific principle, this Sargol, and builds up the thin, weak and debilitated, without any nauseous dosing. In many conditions it is better than cod liver oil, and certainly it is much pleasanter to take.

Send for the 50-cent box today. Convince us by your prompt acceptance of this offer that you are writing in good faith and really desire to gain in weight. The 50-cent package which we will send you free will be an eye-opener to you. We send it that you may see the simple, harmless nature of our new discovery, how easy it is to take, how you gain flesh privately without the knowledge of friends or family until you astonish them by the prompt and unmistakable results.

We could not publish this offer if we were not prepared to live up to it. It is only the astounding results of our new method of treatment that make such an offer and such a guarantee possible on our part. So cut off the coupon today and mail it at once to The Sargol Company, 100-E Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y., and please inclose 10c with your letter to help pay distribution expenses. Take our word, you'll never regret it.

FREE COUPON

Come Eat with Us at Our Expense.

This coupon entitles any thin person to one 50c package of Sargol, the concentrated Flesh Builder (provided you have never tried it), and that 10c is enclosed to cover postage, packing, etc. Read our advertisement printed above, and then put 10c in stamps in letter today with this coupon and the full 50c package will be sent to you by return post. Address: The Sargol Company, 100-E Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y. Write your name and address plainly, and

Pin This Coupon to Your Letter.